

**DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD:  
CORRESPONDENCE AND SELECT DOCUMENTS**



DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD

# DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD: CORRESPONDENCE AND SELECT DOCUMENTS

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Edited by  
VALMIKI CHOUDHARY



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## PREFACE

To understand Rajendra Babu's political ideology and its importance we have to take into account the fact that he was the first among Congress leaders to come under Gandhiji's influence. And once he had accepted his leadership, Rajendra Babu remained loyal to him for the rest of his life. Like a true soldier, Rajendra Babu never flinched from any task that Gandhiji entrusted to him, however difficult or unpleasant it might be. There never was an occasion when he differed from Gandhiji in thought, word or deed. When Gandhiji suspended the non-cooperation movement after the Chouri-Choura violence, many Congress leaders questioned the wisdom of his action, but not Rajendra Babu. On the controversial issue of Council-entry, the Congress split into 'Pro-changers' and 'No-changers'. Rajendra Babu remained a 'No-changer' in total loyalty to his Master. When Subhas Babu resigned the Congress Presidentship at the Calcutta session of the All India Congress Committee in 1939, Rajendra Babu felt disinclined to accept the position. He has recorded this in his autobiography:

I did not want to take it up for two reasons. First, temperamentally I am one who steers clear of controversies and secondly, the next session of the Congress was to be held in Bihar [Ramgarh] and I would not be able to devote myself to the arrangements if I were to entangle myself in all-India affairs. I thought that I would not be able to improve matters by taking up the Presidentship and that the rot would stop only when elections were held for a new President. But all my arguments had to be waived when Gandhiji directed me to take up the responsibility.

Rajendra Babu was a man of clear thinking. He solved intricate problems dexterously and with ease. He kept an open mind and was always prepared to listen to others holding views different from his own. He wielded a facile pen and could win critics over to his own view, through gentle persuasion, as his correspondence bears out. As he wrote in his autobiography, Rajendra Babu was temperamentally indisposed to enter into a controversy with anyone. This engaging trait of his character endeared him to all he came into contact with, including his political opponents. All welcomed his pragmatic approach to a problem and his constructive suggestions. In one of his letters Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, "at the critical moments of Congress party we had looked towards him for guidance". This volume contains a few letters addressed to the then Viceroy and Governor-General wherein Rajendra Babu apprised him of the Congress policy

in regard to the world situation prevailing at the time with perfect ease and inimitable suavity. While acknowledging receipt of the Viceroy's letter enclosing an advance copy of the 'Viceroy's Declaration', Rajendra Babu in his letter dated the 18th October 1939 says: "As Your Excellency has anticipated I am afraid it [the Declaration] falls far short of our wishes and is not likely to satisfy the Congress." In another letter dated the 3rd November 1939 addressed to the Viceroy, while explaining the reasons why it was not possible for the Congress to consider the proposition made by the Viceroy in his letter dated the 2nd November, Rajendra Babu says, politely but firmly:

The present crisis has arisen owing to the outbreak of the war in Europe and the action of the British Government in declaring India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people. The crisis is entirely political and is not related to the communal issue in India. It raises vital questions in regard to the war aims of the British Government and the position of India in relation to them. The Congress Working Committee... issued a lengthy statement on September 14th, 1939, in which they invited British Government to declare these war aims and, in particular, how these aims were going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. ... The Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own Constitution through a Constituent Assembly, without external interference, and should guide their own policy. ...

It was during Rajendra Babu's Presidentship that the Working Committee passed a resolution, on 11 August 1939, removing Subhas Chandra Bose from the Presidentship of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and disqualifying him from holding any office under the Congress for three years. This unpleasant action had to be taken because Subhas Babu had organised an all-India Protest Day on 9 July 1939 against two resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C. at its meeting held in Bombay in June 1939. Despite all this Rajendra Babu did not think that Subhas Babu's political activities were entirely wrong. He felt that Subhas Babu might have had his independent political ideology and principles, as distinguished from those of the Congress, but in patriotism he was second to none. He had the right to express or propagate his own political ideology in his own way. When other Congressmen spoke against Subhas Babu's views or political moves, Rajendra Babu expressed his unhappiness in a Press statement saying that "political ideas and convictions cannot be maintained by suppressing the other side in a democratic organisation like the Congress".

The correspondence and other documents included in this volume pertain to the period from August to December 1939 and their arrangement follows the pattern of the earlier volumes.

I am very much indebted to the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Government of India for evincing keen interest and extending necessary support

and help to the project. I also thank Dr. Hari Dev Sharma of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, for helping me in the editing of this volume.

VALMIKI CHOUDHARY

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June 24, 1985

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# CORRESPONDENCE

## PART I

1. To J.B. Kripalani

Circuit House  
Jamshedpur  
3rd August 1939

My dear Kripalaniji,

Many thanks for your letter. The confusion in the programme of the Working Committee has resulted in the cancellation of your tour programme for which I am very sorry. All this had happened because on the 28th afternoon I received at Hazaribagh a telegram from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Bhulabhai Desai suggesting that an immediate meeting of the Working Committee should be held on the 30th in view of the developing war situation. It was impossible to get all the members in Wardha on the 30th and so I wired to all the members to meet on the 1st August not remembering that Sardar Vallabhbhai would have to be in Bombay on that date. After that I proceeded to Calcutta where I received a message from Sardar and a telegram from Pandit Jawaharlal which made first August impossible. Then I issued a statement cancelling 1st and fixing 9th for the meeting. I came here on the night of the 31st and Pandit Jawaharlal and myself have been engaged with arbitration for these three days. I had my asthmatic trouble in Calcutta which developed here to some extent and since yesterday I have had temperature. I hope to reach Wardha on the evening of the 8th if not earlier. It all depends upon the convenience of the members whether we can have the meeting of the Committee in the afternoon or in the morning. If we all arrive in time we can meet in the morning, otherwise we shall meet at, say, 2 o'clock.

As regards the agenda I think you had included the complaint from Bengal Congressmen regarding the meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee which was held on the 26th. I have received a detailed complaint questioning the legality of that meeting and I have sent a copy to the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for explanation. If that is not included you might include that also. The extension of the life of the Central Legislature should also be included.

As regards the stenographer, you may bring him to Wardha. If I consider him necessary I shall bring him [along].

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Acharya J.B. Kripalani  
Allahabad.

## 2. To Sri Krishna Sinha, Prime Minister, Government of Bihar (Ranchi)

Circuit House, Jamshedpur  
3rd August 1939

My dear Sri Babu,

Babu Bishnulal Singh, M.L.C., had made a representation to me which I had referred to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I am enclosing copy of the legal opinion the Sardar has obtained in the matter. It would seem that nothing further can be done.

Jayaprakash Babu who is here saw me this afternoon. He has told me that the dispute which had led to Satyagraha near Pandaul in the district of Darbhanga has been referred to arbitration and will most probably be settled. A large number of people have been arrested many of whom have been convicted while others are awaiting trial. He was suggesting to me that now when the dispute is about to be settled the cases against those who are under trial should not be proceeded with and the question of releasing those already convicted should also be considered. He is under the impression that the District Magistrate is not able to do anything in the matter without orders from the Government. I have asked him to see you which he will do.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

*Enclosure:*

(Copy of the legal opinion regarding curtailing the term of office of Shri Bishnulal Singh, M.L.C.)

Section 61, Sub-section 3, of the Government of India Act runs as follows:

Every Legislative Council shall be a permanent body not subject to dissolution, but as near as may be one-third of the members thereof shall retire in every third year in accordance with the provision in that behalf made in relation to the Province under the said Fifth Schedule.

Rule 18 of the Fifth Schedule runs as follows:

The term of office of a member of the Legislative Council of a Province, other than a member chosen to fill a casual vacancy, shall be nine years, but upon the first constitution of the Council the Governor in his discretion shall make by order such provision as he thinks fit, by curtailing the term of office of some of the members then chosen, for securing that, as nearly as

may be one-third of the members holding seats of each class shall retire in every third year thereafter.

A member chosen to fill a casual vacancy shall be chosen to serve for the remainder of his predecessor's term of office.

In this case it is stated that the Governor of Bihar directed that the order in which the members of the Legislative Council should retire should be determined by lot. The substance of His Excellency the Governor's communication was communicated by the Honourable the President of the Council to the members of the Council in his letter No. 345 LC, dt. 26th April 1938. I have not before me a copy of that letter. Accordingly a ballot, it appears, was held as a result of which there was no reduction in the term of office of Shri Bishnulal Singh, but the term of office of another member, Kumar Rajiva Ranjan Prasad Singh, was reduced from nine to three years. However when the order was published in the Gazette the name of Kumar Rajiva Ranjan Prasad Singh was included in the list of members who were to enjoy the whole term of nine years, whereas the name of Shri Bishnulal Singh appeared in the list of members who were to retire at the end of three years. I have not before me a copy of the Bihar Gazette.

The question for consideration is whether Shri Bishnulal Singh has any remedy in a court of law. In my opinion there is none. The direction of the Governor [to] draw lots was only in the nature of a preliminary order and was not the order contemplated by Rule 18. Rule 18 requires the Governor to make by order such provision as he thinks fit by curtailing the term etc. The preliminary order of the Governor did not curtail the term of any of the members but only asked for lots to be drawn in order to enable him to make provision as contemplated by Rule 18. The Governor was not bound by the result of the lot and until he made a final order as required by Rule 18 he was at liberty to disregard the result of the ballot.

A similar question arose in Bombay also. By an order made by the Governor of Bombay on the 6th July 1937, he fixed the tenure of seats and asked lots to be drawn to determine the members whose term of office was to be curtailed in accordance with the tenure of seats which he had fixed. The result was that what were multiple-seat constituencies were turned into single-member constituencies and the order so made was not in accordance with the requirements of Rule 18 of Schedule V and was in contravention of the recommendations of the Hammond Committee. The question then arose whether the Governor had a right to make another order. The question was considered carefully and the conclusion was that the order of 6th July was a preliminary order and by itself did not curtail the term of office of the members but required something to be done in order to enable the Governor to make a final order as contemplated by Rule 18. That order was therefore cancelled and another order was passed in terms of Rule 18.

No doubt it is true that once a final order under Rule 18 is made, the Governor becomes *functus officio* and his power or duty under Rule 18 is exhausted. He has thereafter no power to vary or modify such a final order (Section 31, Sub-section

1, of the Interpretation Act, 1889, 52-53 Victoria, Chapter 63). But in this case there was no such final order and therefore the Governor was at liberty to disregard the result of the ballot.

3. *To Sri Krishna Sinha, Prime Minister, Government of Bihar (Ranchi)*

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL  
(Not for office use)

Circuit House  
Jamshedpur  
3rd August 1939

My dear Sri Babu,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter and enclosure I have received from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and my reply to him. Shri Shanti Prasad Jain met me in Calcutta. I think after all it is hardly possible to do anything in the matter. The interest of the Government of course is not to permit any monopoly to be established as far as possible but the Government's position should not be utilised for any private ends and it is certainly wrong to take shelter behind the Government for going back upon a settlement. But before forming any opinion or taking any step I think the best course will be to send for Shri Shanti Prasad Jain and have a talk with him. If they have really made any agreement, as it appears they have done, then there is nothing further for the Government to add. Sardar's letter may be treated as confidential and only the fact of the agreement having been reached should be conveyed to him and if necessary the terms might also be shown to him.

I am enclosing a letter I have received from Maulana Azad. When I was in Ranchi Maulana Sajjad brought to me Mr. Nizamuddin and recommended that he might be made the Assistant Government Advocate in place of Mr. Jaffar Imam. The day I was leaving I met Krishna Ballabh and enquired of him about the vacancy. He told me that it would be best not to allow Mr. Jaffar Imam to resign. In case he insists you will consider the suggestion of Maulana Azad. I do not know the position at the bar of the various candidates and cannot therefore say anything about any one of them. I think it will be best in a matter like this to consult the High Court.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

4. From S. Satyamurti

"Sundra"  
Tyagarajanagar  
Madras  
4 August 1939

My dear Rajen Babu,

I am sending you a copy of the letter I am addressing Mahatmaji today. I request you to consider it carefully. I do hope the Working Committee will take strong action.

I am leaving for Simla tomorrow. My address there is 13 Cart Road. I shall be glad to hear from you there. With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,  
S. Satyamurti

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Camp: Wardha.

*Enclosure:*

(Copy of letter from S. Satyamurti to Mahatma Gandhi)

"Sundra"  
Tyagarajanagar  
Madras  
4 August 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

On the eve of the next meeting of the Congress Working Committee which meets at Wardha on the 9th instant I venture to address you a private letter for your considering the same and sharing it with Babu Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and other friends.

I have been as usual carefully reading your recent articles in the *Harijan* and pondering over them. Of course, the first question which will come up before the Working Committee is the internal crisis in the Congress which you have described in a recent article as very serious. In fact, you used the somewhat disturbing words: "If the Congress survives the present crisis." I venture to suggest to you that the present crisis can be met and that the Congress can and will survive by resolution and strength on the part of the majority in the Congress today. That majority is not accidental or arbitrary. That majority was tested at Tripuri, at Calcutta and at Bombay and has survived all these very severe and trying tests. I am convinced that that majority represents the vast majority of Congress feeling and opinion throughout the country. I cannot allow even very



eminent Congressmen to rebel against the Congress. Babu Subhas Chandra Bose as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee as it supports him now must go out of the Congress and the Congress must function through other agencies in Bengal till we get an executive which will accept the decision of the All-India Congress Committee and of the Indian National Congress. This may seem a drastic step, but I see no alternative.

I have been very seriously considering the conversation I had with you at Bombay over members of the Congress belonging to and being office-bearers of other political organisations. I fully realise the force of what you told me, that we must not, in preventing the functioning of other political organisations, prevent the healthy growth of opinion and thereby stifle the natural growth of the Congress. But it does seem to me, Mahatmaji, that once we begin to make a distinction between one political organisation and another as opposed to and different from the Indian National Congress we shall never know where to draw the line, and wherever we draw the line we are bound to be misunderstood. I am therefore convinced after the most careful consideration of your arguments that the only basis on which the Congress can preserve itself and grow in influence, strength and prestige to fight for and win Purna Swaraj for this country by legitimate and peaceful means is to make a rule that no member of an elected Congress Committee shall be a member of any other political organisation. This does not prevent four-anna Congress members from joining this organisation. Nor does it prevent even members of elected Congress Committees from joining other organisations like Labour Unions and Kisan Sabhas which work for the legitimate rights of their members. What I want is that on major political issues the Indian National Congress must be the only platform on which members of elected Congress Committees should be free to address and educate the public. Otherwise there is every danger, and it is growing everyday, of Congress prestige, nay your prestige and name being exploited by people who do not accept either the policy of the Congress or your policy in order to confuse and mislead the people. I therefore beg of you to consider very earnestly whether the time has not arrived to make the rule I have mentioned. If you feel like making any exceptions you may. But I think a beginning ought to be made and that we ought to put down this fissiparous tendency. Undoubtedly, the Forward Bloc has proved itself a rebel. A rule must be made at least against that bloc to begin with.

I have read your article as regards Hindu-Muslim unity. I want you to consider whether the abolition of separate electorates is not the condition precedent for real communal unity in this country. So long as separate electorates exist, communal leaders will exist and flourish at the expense of national-minded leaders. It is obvious that an average Hindu will vote for a Hindu who promised to protect Hindu as against Indian rights and that an average Muslim will vote for the Muslim who goes to the legislature to protect Muslim rights as against Indian rights. This is inevitable in human nature. I therefore think that the Congress should make the abolition of separate electorates and the substitution

of joint electorates with reservation of seats for minorities for the time being on a just if not generous scale a major political issue. That way seem to lie the chances of real communal unity, and the Congress provincial governments must take every possible step in this direction and get the consent of the communities concerned. Even if in one or two Provinces we succeed in getting the communities concerned agree to a general arrangement among all communities to get separate electorates substituted by joint electorates that agreement will go a long way towards solving the problem.

I have also read your recent article on the evils of provincialism. I repeat my plea with you that this cry for linguistic Provinces, Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala, etc., is really an evil whose proportions threaten to become even uglier than those of communalism, bad as they are. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that the problem of linguistic Provinces must not be taken up till the bigger problem of the freedom of the country has been solved. Yet members of the Working Committee and Presidents of the Provincial Congress Committees have been agitating in a most unseemly manner for the creation of the Andhra Province or of the Karnataka Province. I do not think we can really check the tide of provincialism unless we take a strong line on this matter, reaffirming the Working Committee's resolution saying that this problem of linguistic Provinces can be solved only by a free India untrammelled by the presence of a third party.

I shall be glad if you consider all these matters and place your views before the Working Committee. I shall be glad to hear that these views have received your attention.

I thank you very much for your kind blessings and best wishes to Sri Lakshmi. I hope and pray that she may always be worthy of your blessings and affection. Sri Lakshmi is writing to you separately in Hindustani.

S. Satyamurti

### 5. *From Subhas Chandra Bose*

Camp: Berhampore  
7th August 1939

My dear Rajen Babu,

I am exceedingly sorry for the delay in replying to your letter of the 18th July, from Ranchi. You have asked me for an explanation of my action in protesting against certain resolutions of the All India Congress Committee passed at Bombay.

In the first place, one has to distinguish between protesting against a certain resolution and actually defying it or violating it. What has so far happened is that I have only protested against two resolutions of the A.I.C.C.

It is my constitutional right to give expression to my opinion regarding any

resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. You will perhaps admit that it is customary with a large number of Congressmen to express their views on resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C. when a particular session of that body comes to a close. If you grant Congressmen the right to express their views on resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C. you cannot draw a line and say that only favourable opinions will be allowed expression and unfavourable opinions will be banned. If we have the constitutional right to express our views then it does not matter if those views are favourable or unfavourable. Your letter seems to suggest that only expression of unfavourable views is to be banned.

We have so long been fighting the British Government, among other things, for our Civil Liberty. Civil Liberty, I take it, includes freedom of speech. According to your point of view we are not to claim freedom of speech when we do not see eye to eye with the majority in the A.I.C.C. or in the Congress. It would be a strange situation if we are to have the right of freedom of speech as against the British Government but not as against the Congress or any body subordinate to it. If we are denied the right to adversely criticise resolutions of the A.I.C.C. which in our view are harmful to the country's cause then it would amount to denial of a democratic right. May I ask you in all seriousness if democratic rights are to be exercised only outside the Congress but not inside it?

I hope you will agree that when a resolution is once passed by the A.I.C.C., it is open to us to have it reviewed or amended or altered or rescinded at a subsequent meeting of that body. I hope you will also agree that it is open to us to appeal against the A.I.C.C. to the higher court of appeal, namely, the open session of the Congress. You will agree further, I hope, that it is open to a minority to carry on a propaganda with a view to converting the majority to its point of view. Now how can we do this except by appealing to Congressmen through public meetings and through writings in the Press? The Congress today is not an organisation of a handful of men. Its membership has, I believe, reached the neighbourhood of 45 lakhs. We can hope to appeal to the rank and file of the Congress and to convert them to our point of view only if we are allowed to write in the Press and also to hold meetings. If you maintain that once a resolution is passed in the A.I.C.C. it is sacrosanct and must hold good for ever, then you may have some justification for banning criticism of it. But if you grant us the right to review or amend or alter or rescind a particular resolution of the A.I.C.C., either through that body or through the open session of the Congress, then I do not see how you can gag criticism, as you have been trying to do.

I am afraid you are giving an interpretation to the word 'discipline' which I cannot accept. I consider myself to be a stern disciplinarian and I am afraid that in the name of discipline you are trying to check healthy criticism. Discipline does not mean denying a person his constitutional and democratic right.

Apart from the fact that it is our constitutional and democratic right to protest against resolutions which in our view are harmful to the country's cause, a consideration of the merits of the two resolutions will show that such protests were really called for. In our view these two resolutions, if given effect to, will

serve to accentuate the drift towards constitutionalism, to increase the influence, power and authority of the Provincial Ministries at the cost of the Congress organisations, to isolate artificially the Congress from the general public as also the A.I.C.C. from the rank and file of the Congress. Moreover they will serve to undermine the revolutionary spirit of the Congress. Consequently in the best interests of the country, these two resolutions should be immediately held in abeyance and ultimately altered suitably or withdrawn.

In this connection I cannot help drawing your attention to certain incidents at the time of the Gaya Congress in 1922 and after. Please do not forget what the Swaraj Party did in those days. Please do not forget either that when the A.I.C.C. amended the resolution of the Gaya Congress, the Gujarat P.C.C. resolved to defy it.

Lastly, please do not forget that Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Young India*, if my recollection is correct, that the minority has the right to rebel. We have not gone so far yet as to actually rebel against the decision of the majority. We have simply taken the liberty of criticising certain resolutions passed by the majority in the teeth of our opposition.

I am really surprised that you have made so much of what we regard as our inherent right. I hope you will accept my explanation as satisfactory. But if you do not do so and if you decide to resort to disciplinary action, I shall gladly face it for the sake of what I regard as a just cause. In conclusion, I have to request that if any Congressman is penalised in connection with the events of the 9th July, then you will also take action against me. If the observance of an All-India Day of the 9th July is a crime then, I confess, I am the arch-criminal.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Subhas Chandra Bose

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
Wardha.

6. *From Prof. Gulshan Rai*

24 Melaram Road  
Lahore  
8th August 1939

Dear Babu Rajendra Prasadjee,

During the last month I have been touring in the N.W. Frontier Province, with a view to study the causes of the tribal raids into the settled districts of that Province. I also wanted to study how far the Congress organisation in that Province is gaining or losing ground. I spent some 11 days in the Province, and

visited Peshawar, Khyber Pass, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan. I have put my impressions on paper in the form of a note. I have submitted it to Mahatma Gandhi, which I believe he received at Abbottabad on the 24th of July. I am forwarding a copy of this note to you, and another copy to Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel. I hope you will find this note of some interest.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,

Gulshan Rai

Senior Professor of History and Political Science,  
Sanatana Dharma College, Lahore, and  
Fellow, Punjab University

*Enclosure:*

### (A Note on the Frontier Province)

For some months past it had been my intention to visit the North-West Frontier Province, and study the causes of the raids committed by the transborder tribesmen in the settled districts of that Province. I set before myself the study of the following problems:

- (1) Why the tribesmen commit raids.
- (2) Why is the civil administration unable to prevent these raids.
- (3) What is the position of the Hindu and Sikh minorities in this Province under the new regime.
- (4) Is the Congress gaining or losing popularity in this Province.
- (5) What should be done to prevent raids, to secure to the Hindu and Sikh minorities the protection of their person and property, and to strengthen the position of the Congress in that Province.

1. I left Lahore on the evening of July 2nd, and reached Peshawar on the morning of July 3rd. I re-crossed the Indus, and left the soil of the Frontier Province on the 14th of July. During these 11 days I visited Peshawar, the Khyber Pass, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan. I interviewed representative men among Congressmen, Muslim Leaguers, Hindu Sabhaites, officials, as well as non-officials. I had long interviews with two Ministers also, namely, Dr. Khan Sahib, the Premier, and Diwan Bhanju Ram, the Finance Minister. There are several viewpoints on the causes of the raids by the transborder people. Some attribute it to the Forward Policy of the British Government, others attribute it to the weakening of the civil administration under the Congress Government; there are still others who hold increased communal tension between the Hindus and the Muslims responsible for this. Lastly, there are those also who think that

the Political Department of the Government of India, in league with the civil servants of the settled districts who want to discredit the Congress Government in the Frontier, are deliberately following a policy of doing nothing to check raids.

I have tried to examine each of these theories. I set out the reactions on my mind in the words given below: Before 1919, the International frontiers of India were along the river Oxus, on the other side of Kabul, across the Hindukush. The foreign relations of Afghanistan were controlled by the Government of India. There was, before 1919, no possibility of any foreign intrigue against India within the territories of Afghanistan. But the situation has changed after the 3rd Afghan War of 1919. Afghanistan has now obtained complete independence. Foreign embassies have been established in Kabul, and now the British Government is not called upon to intervene if the Russo-Afghan or Perso-Afghan frontiers are at any time infringed. So long as the British Government controlled the high mountain walls of the Hindukush, they had no necessity of fortifying the Durand Line which separates Afghanistan from India. Since 1919 the frontiers of India in the northwest have weakened. The passes in the Hindukush are not less than 11,000 or 12,000 feet above the sea level. The Khyber Pass is hardly 3,500 feet above the sea level. Evidently greater efforts have to be made for the fortification of the Durand Line. It is during the last 20 years that cantonments, military posts, and military camps have in large numbers been established along the Durand Line, and in the tribal areas east of this line. All this has necessitated the opening up of the tribal areas in Waziristan, Kurrum, Khyber, and Mohmand. A very large number of military roads have recently been constructed in the tribal areas to maintain communications of these frontier military posts with the interior of the country. This Forward Policy in the tribal areas is resented by the tribesmen, who were so far quite free in their homelands, and whose affairs were not interfered with from outside. It is urged that the raids of the tribesmen in the settled districts are a sort of retaliation against the Forward Policy of the Government. But one thing has to be set off against this. It is the policy of British Government to give all contracts for the construction of roads, cantonments, and barracks, and works of water supply to contractors belonging to the tribal areas. A very large amount of the money in the military budget of the Government flows into the tribal areas, and is spent among the tribesmen. This should improve the economic condition of the tribesmen, who have very little natural resources in their own lands to provide them with means of livelihood. The Political Department seems to think that the tribesmen should welcome this opportunity of making money, but in their opinion it is the fanatical Mullahs who rouse these people against Government. The Muslims on the other hand think that the wild tribesmen love their natural liberty more than economic betterment, and in their opinion this greater frequency of raids by transborder people will stop the moment the British Government withdraws from the tribal areas. But the Hindus do not agree with the Muslims. They think that unless the tribal areas are completely subdued, and the entire country is opened up, and sufficiently

patrolled by the military, the raids by the transborder people can never be completely eliminated. They agree that the Forward Policy may have to some extent increased the raiding activities of the transborder people but there were raids off and on even before the Forward Policy was adopted. They are of opinion that even with the Forward Policy in full force, the raids can be stopped by Government only if they take drastic action against the marauders. These Hindus seem to argue like this. The different political parties in the Central Assembly, whether they be Congressmen, or the Muslim Leaguers, or the Congress nationalists, do not support the Forward Policy of Government. The Government requires large amounts of money to push forward their policy of penetrating the tribal areas. The Assembly contains a Hindu majority. Unless it is demonstrated that the person and property of the Hindus living in the settled districts are not safe at the hands of the tribesmen without subduing the tribesmen, there can be no justification for taking expeditionary forces into these tribal areas. Once the justification for these expeditions is established, the roads can be constructed at the point of the bayonet. Some people go so far as to say that the so-called fanatical Mullahs are really the secret agents of the Political Department, and they create troubles simply to invite expeditionary forces. The young blood, or Kushranis as they are called, are roused to create trouble, and the elders, or Mashranis as they are called, later on smooth matters for Government, when the roads are completed. The actual existence of these Mullahs is not denied. But it is held the Political Department exaggerates their activities, and credits them with too much influence, which in reality they do not possess. By means of this propaganda the Government induces the Central Assembly to keep quiet when large amounts are sanctioned to push through the Forward Policy, which is otherwise distasteful to the vast majority of the members. So far as I can see the Forward Policy, inasmuch as it consists in the penetration and opening up of the tribal areas, is, in view of the present international situation, a necessity. Money must be found for the proper defence and fortification of the Durand Line. But if what is stated by the Hindus and the Congressmen is true, then the methods adopted by the Government to obtain funds for the purpose are clearly wrong. To obtain funds for the ostensible object of protecting the person and property of the Hindus, and then to use it for furthering the real object of constructing roads for military needs, is to deceive the country. It is to set the Hindus and the Muslims against each other. The right course for the Government is to come forward openly before the country, and to demand supplies for the prosecution of the Forward Policy which is necessary for the proper defence of the country. This roundabout way of obtaining supplies is not right. If the Government undertakes to open up the country by building roads and constructing military works in the tribal country, it is certainly their duty to see that the tribesmen do not cross over into the settled districts, and create trouble for the civil administration there. The Frontier Constabulary is to a very great extent under the control of the Political Department of the Government of India. The cost of its maintenance is met by the

Government of India. It should be the function of the Frontier Constabulary to see that tribesmen do not pass into the settled districts. The Political Agents are in charge of the tribal areas. The responsibility for mischief done by the tribesmen in the settled districts should be fixed on the Political Agents. At the present moment the Political Officers in the tribal areas simply pass on information about the movements of tribal gangs to the Civil authorities. This is not enough. It is the duty of the Political Officers in charge of the tribal areas to organise pursue parties, and try to prevent their entry into the settled districts. If the Government is anxious to open up the tribal areas, their Political Agents should be called upon to keep greater control over the tribesmen.

2. Why is the civil administration in the North-West Frontier Province under the Congress Government unable to maintain peace and security? Has the administrative machinery during the period of office of the Congress Government weakened? That is the charge brought against them by the Hindu-Sikh Party in the Provincial Assembly. How far is this charge correct? If the administrative machinery has weakened, who is responsible for it? The situation requires a careful analysis. During the short period I have been touring in the Province, some few facts have come to my notice. The Congress Party assumed office in the Frontier a little less than two years ago. The first thing they did after assumption of office was to abolish Honorary Magistrates. After this they abolished the Zaildars in Dera Ismail Khan, and the Malik Tappas in the other districts. These rural dignitaries correspond to the Deshmukhs in Maharashtra. They have also cut down the jageers paid from Provincial revenues. They are thinking of abolishing the Lambardars, or Village Headmen, who correspond to Village Mukhiyas and Patels in other parts of the country. Under the old regime the district officers relied upon the cooperation of the Honorary Magistrates, Zaildars, and Jageerdars and Lambardars for the detection and suppression of crime. All these agencies have now, with the exception of Village Headmen, disappeared. The rural dignitaries formerly enjoyed Government patronage and in return they helped the Government in maintaining peace and security in the country. Under the present conditions, when all their powers and influence are gone, they have become too sullen to help the Government in tracing crime. The transborder tribesmen are now harboured in the villages of the settled districts far more frequently than they used to be in former times. The district authorities remain in the dark as to what is happening in the countryside. This has resulted in an immense increase in serious crimes. It seems the absconders of the settled districts seek refuge in the tribal areas; they induce the tribal people, many of whom are their relatives, to make raids into the settled districts where they are harboured by the local badmashes. Sometimes the local people in the villages of the settled districts are so terrorised that they are compelled to give food and other supplies to the raiders. All this takes place under the very nose of the local rural dignitaries, such as the Zaildars, the Jageerdars, and the big Maliks, who were formerly invested with magisterial powers, but they do not move their little fingers to resist the raiders or to give information about their movements. Before



the new democratic system of government was introduced, the District Magistrates punished the villages where the raiders were harboured, either by imposing heavy fines on the villagers concerned, or by stationing punitive police for some time in the area, the cost of which was recovered from the local inhabitants. Holding local people responsible for disturbance of the peace, or for serious crime in the area, is an old Indian method of suppressing crime, and it is well understood by the mass of the people. But under the new democratic system of Government, where the Ministers depend on the votes of the people for retaining political power in the Province, the Ministers in the Frontier Province do not like the idea of levying fines or imposing punitive police. They fear such action on their part might make them unpopular in the countryside, and therefore might not enable them to win the next elections. The result is that whenever the local Deputy Commissioners recommend the imposition of punitive police, or levy of fine on the villages concerned, or propose some other drastic action, they are overruled, and they are asked to trace the individual offenders, which, on account of the terror of the local people or the sullenness of the local rural dignitaries, it is not possible to do. Thus crime is neither traced nor suppressed. This results in encouragement of crime. I have discussed the matter with prominent Congressmen in the Province. It is true the old agency of the local rural dignitaries for the detection and suppression of crime has in course of time become very corrupt and inefficient. But the right policy should have been to reform and improve this agency, and not to abolish it altogether. I can realise that without the existence of some local agency for cooperation with the administration, it is not possible for the district officers to detect and suppress crime. The Congress Government has, without setting up another machinery for the detection and suppression of crime, abolished the existing one. Those older rural dignitaries who formerly helped the administration in this matter, are now perhaps finding consolation in the idea that without their help peace and security cannot be maintained in the countryside. I would not be surprised if they are found to be fomenting trouble secretly. The Congress Government could have done one thing. They could have required the Red Shirt volunteers to become responsible for the maintenance of peace and security in the areas from where the local rural dignitaries were removed. But this has not been done. It appears the Congress Government was anxious to divest the bureaucracy of all power and influence in the countryside. They wanted to show to the people that all power and patronage had now passed from the hands of the Deputy Commissioners to the hands of the Ministers. It seems the Ministers are trying to gather all power in their own hands, and want to leave very little discretion with the district officers. The voters have begun to realise that if they want any favour or privilege, they need not approach the Deputy Commissioner or the other district officers, but should approach the Ministers direct. This centralisation of all the strings of the administration in the hands of the Ministers has made their task too heavy. Wherever they go there are crowds of visitors to dispose of. They have hardly any time to formulate their policies on sound and well considered bases. Everything

What new means of livelihood are open to them? The Hindu leaders are so depressed by their present losses, and they are so terror-stricken by the frequent raids which are directed against them, that they are not in a mood to think for the future. Many of them are instinctively turning for help to their old patrons, the British bureaucracy. But they can expect no help from that quarter. The problem is a serious one, and it requires immediate attention.

4. What is the position of the Congress in the Province at the present moment? Among the Muslims, all those who have lost the positions of Honorary Magistrates, Zaildars or Malik Tappas, or been deprived of jageerदारis are now dead against the Congress Ministry. All these rural worthies have joined the Muslim League. A very large number of the Khans, the Khwanias as they are called, and who had so far depended on the patronage and favour of the British bureaucracy, are now in the Muslim League. The tenant class who want relief [against] their landlords, are not receiving any support from the Congress Government, so far as reduction in rents is concerned. It is true they have to some extent received remissions of the feudal impositions such as Tirai (grazing charges) etc., but that, too, without satisfying the cultivators, has antagonised the Khwanias. This tends to encourage the tenants to join kisan movement and the Khans to feel attracted towards the Muslim League. The Congress Government has not so far dared to undertake tenancy legislation for fear of further offending the Khans. The Hindus are displeased with the Congress Ministry, because it is unable to prevent the raids, and because it is displacing them from the public services, and putting restrictions on their trade activities. The Muslim gentry is offended because it has lost positions of power and influence. The mass of the Muslims are not quite satisfied, because the cultivators have received no relief against the landlords at any rate so far as reduction in rents is concerned. The Ministry is trying to retain its hold on the mass of the Muslim voters by not taking punitive action against those villagers who harbour the [raiders and it] is quite uncertain as to how far by these methods the Ministry will be able to remain popular among the [voters]. But there is no doubt that the Muslim League is getting stronger day by day. The only difficulty in the way of Muslim League is that they are so far unable to determine the personnel of their Ministry. They have not yet been able to reconcile the personal jealousies that exist among prominent members of the Muslim League. So long as the prominent Muslim Leaguers are not able to compose their differences, the Congress Government can hope to carry on. But I have reason to believe that the Congress Party in the Frontier Province is not gaining popularity in the countryside.

5. What should be done to prevent raids? I should think that the old method of fixing responsibility on the local dignitaries and the villages should be revived. The district authorities should be left [with] ample powers to deal with local situations. This is so far as the settled districts are concerned. But the Political Officers too have a responsibility in the matter. The Frontier Constabulary, which is maintained entirely at the cost of the Central Government, should be required to prevent the entry of tribesmen into the tribal

areas without proper passes. [At] the present moment whenever these tribesmen cross over into the settled districts, they are only required to deposit their arms at the borders, but otherwise they are allowed to move about freely in the settled districts. This should not be permitted. For any mischief done by the tribesmen in the settled districts, the Political Officers should be held responsible. It is true it is now proposed to have special police posts on the borders, and it is proposed to revive the old custom of organising [pursue] parties. It is a good idea. It may to some extent improve matters. But so long as there remains in the matter a joint responsibility of the Deputy Commissioners serving under the Ministers, and of the Political Agents serving under the Political Department of the Government of India, the problem cannot be solved. The responsibility for raids by the tribesmen should be fixed entirely on the Political Officers, and the Frontier Constabulary should be entirely under their orders.

The Hindu and Sikh minorities can be secured the protection of their person and property only when the local rural dignitaries and the villagers are held responsible for the maintenance of peace and security in their respective areas. The Ministry should give up the policy of catching votes by overlooking the faults of the local people. No Government can successfully carry on administration without the cooperation of the local people and this local cooperation cannot be obtained unless they are invested with local responsibility.

In order to strengthen the position of the Congress in the Frontier Province, it is quite necessary to win over the Khwarias and local rural dignitaries. Instead of depriving them of their positions of power and influence, their cooperation should be sought in the administration of the country. Again, instead of meeting the communalistic demands of the Muslims, a policy of fairness and justice should be followed. The Hindu and Sikh minorities in the Assembly should be taken into confidence by the Ministry, whenever any legislation or executive action affecting their interests is undertaken. It seems so far the Ministry has kept even those Hindus who sit on the ministerial benches in the dark, in connection with their agrarian legislation. Such a policy is not likely to induce the minorities to offer a willing support to the Ministry. If, in connection with their recent agrarian legislation, the Congress Ministry had drafted their proposal in consultation with the Hindu members of their party, the measures would have been so improved as to evoke very little opposition at the hands of the minorities. In that case the Ministry would have carried out their reforms without antagonising the minorities. That would have meant great strength to the Congress.

Gulshan Rai

7. To J.B. Kripalani

PERSONAL

Ahmedabad  
8th August 1939

My dear Kripalani,

My attention has been drawn to one or two points arising out of the red book published by the National Planning Committee. I wonder if you have seen the book. If not, I would request you to kindly see it. You must have received a copy of it from the office of the Committee.

On page 65 of the book, there is the Chairman's note on the Congress policy. Para 3 runs as follows:

Since 1920, Congress has laid down stress on hand-spinning and hand-weaving and that emphasis continues. In May 1929, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution to the effect that "In order to remove the poverty and misery of the Indian people and to ameliorate the condition of the masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structures of society and to remove the gross inequalities." *This resolution indicates an approval of socialistic theories*, but apart from this general approval and some further advances in subsequent resolutions, the Congress has not, in any way, accepted socialism.

The question arises as to whether the interpretation put on the resolution is quite correct. Does it really indicate an approval of the socialistic theories? Is that interpretation acceptable to the Working Committee? Kindly consider and let me know.

On page 77, there is a note for the guidance of the Sub-Committee of the National Planning Committee. Para 3 runs as follows:

What is Planning? Planning under a democratic system may be defined as the technical coordination by disinterested *experts*, or consumption, production, investment, trade and income distribution *in accordance with social objectives set by bodies representative of the Nation*. Such planning is not only to be considered from the point of view of living, but must include cultural and spiritual values and the human side of the life.

In the paragraph above referred to, mention is made of bodies representative of the Nation. So far as we are concerned, the Congress is the representative organization of the Nation. Had it set forth any definite social objective for planning? If so, what is it exactly? It is necessary to have a clear and

comprehensive exposition thereof so that there may be no room for any doubts or misunderstandings.

Another point to be considered is the composition of the Committee. Are the members of the Committee that have been appointed in full accord with the known and declared policy and programme of the Congress and will they be able to give effect to them in working out the plan? A feeling of doubt arises when one finds that several of the members of the Committee are not even primary members of the Congress organisation and some of them may have even pronounced views or acted in opposition to important policies and programmes of the Congress. To give a recent instance, one of the members of the Committee, I am given to understand, sponsored at a public meeting in Bombay a resolution calling for the social boycott of Dr. Gilder, the Minister for Health and Excise of the Government of Bombay, for the only reason that he has initiated and is carrying out the Congress Programmes of Prohibition in the City of Bombay. This goes to show that on an important issue like the Prohibition to which so much importance is attached in the Congress circle, there is a serious lack of accord.

In the matter of Swadeshi, too, one does not know how far the policy and programme of the Congress are really acceptable to them. The policy regarding Swadeshi is set forth in the resolution of the Working Committee passed in July 1934 at its sitting at Benares and is as follows:

"Doubts having arisen on the Congress policy in regard to Swadeshi, it has become necessary to reaffirm the Congress position on it in unequivocal terms.

"Notwithstanding what was done during the civil resistance struggle, no competition is permissible on Congress platforms and in Congress exhibitions between mill-made cloth and hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. Congressmen are expected to use and encourage the use of only hand-spun and hand-woven khadi to the exclusion of any other cloth.

"In regard to articles other than cloth, the Working Committee adopts the following formula for the guidance of all Congress organisations:

The Working Committee is of opinion that the activities of the Congress organisations relating to Swadeshi shall be restricted to useful articles manufactured in India through cottage and other small industries which are in need of popular education for their support and which will accept the guidance of the Congress organisation in regulating prices and in the matter of the wages and welfare of labour under their control.

"This formula must not be interpreted to mean any modification of the unbroken policy of the Congress to promote the Swadeshi spirit in the country and to encourage the personal use of only Swadeshi articles. The formula is a recognition of the fact that the large and organised industries which can or do command state aid are in no need of the services of Congress organisations or any Congress effort in their behalf."

The well-being of the people depends upon sound planning and one cannot but desire that the true representatives of the people, who have a living and intimate knowledge of the life and conditions of the masses and who are known to possess their confidence, should have a determining voice in the Committee that has to guide and decide this plan for the country.

I may also draw attention to the resolution passed at the Conference of Ministers of Industries regarding the formation of National Planning Commission for giving effect to the recommendation of the Planning Committee. The resolution is as follows:

“This conference is further of opinion that a commission, *fully representative of all India*, including the British Indian Provinces of the Indian States, should be appointed *for the purpose of giving effect to resolutions 1 and 2 after due consideration of the recommendation of the Planning Committee*. The Commission, to be called the All India National Planning Committee, shall consist of the following members with power to co-opt:

- (a) One nominee of the Government of each Province or State cooperating in this work;
- (b) Four representatives of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce;
- (c) A representative of the All India Village Industries Association; and
- (d) All Members of the Planning Committee mentioned in Resolution No. 3.”

One does not know what the view of the Working Committee in this matter is. Has any decision been taken in this matter? If it is decided to appoint such a Commission, is the composition suggested for it such as would make it fully representative of all India?

These are matters, it is felt, that should receive due attention and, if you agree, I would request you to place them before Gandhiji so that they may receive timely consideration from him.

Yours sincerely,  
[Rajendra Prasad]

Sjt. J.B. Kripalani  
General Secretary  
All India Congress Committee  
Allahabad. U.P.

8. To Subhas Chandra Bose

Camp: Wardha  
August 11, 1939

Dear Subhas Babu,

I received your telegram mentioning newspaper report that the Working Committee has dissolved the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee and I have

wired to you immediately that your information was unfounded. The fact is that a complaint has been pending before the Working Committee for some time against the constitution of the existing Provincial Congress Committee. The matter was considered by the Working Committee but as no explanation has been received from the Delhi P.C.C., the copy of the complaint has been sent to the D.P.C.C. for such explanation as it may have to offer. No action has been taken. I have on the file copy of a telegram sent by you to the Delhi P.C.C. which explains your viewpoint regarding the ruling you gave.

I shall feel obliged if you kindly let me have the reason which influenced you in giving the ruling on the basis of which co-option was made for consideration with explanation from the Delhi P.C.C.

I am sending you herewith copies of the telegram and the applications which have been under consideration. I am here for a week.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosures not included.

9. *From V.K. Krishna Menon*

THE INDIA LEAGUE

165 Strand  
London, W.C. 2  
11th August 1939

Dear Rajendra Babu,

You may remember that you instructed me to attend the Conference in Defence of Democracy, Peace and Humanity held in Paris last May.

Within the time available it dealt with the colonial problem generally, that is to say, the colonial problem as a whole and not of any special territories.

Speaking on behalf of India and by special invitation of the Conference authorities, I stated the Indian point of view as outlined in the Congress resolutions and in your cable. The statement was extremely well received. In the speeches in committee the specific questions of India's policy in relation to peace and the problem of Indian freedom were all raised and obtained good support. It was no function of the Conference to pass resolutions on the special constitutional problems of any particular territory.

The Congress authorities, whose credentials are well known to us and to Pandit Nehru in particular, have written saying that "Naturally it was not possible for the Conference to deal in all necessary details with this very urgent and very complex problem. That it is an urgent necessity for such a serious and exhaustive examination is, however, obvious to all democrats."

It is therefore proposed to call a special conference, "not in the nature of a mass gathering, but a private working conference" as soon as possible, preferably in September, attended by representatives of democratic opinion in the "Metropolitan" countries and of the subject peoples.

I am requested by the organisers to let them know whether I would attend this Conference. I understand that the holding of the Conference and its success depends largely on the support given to it by India and other important countries in the Empire system.

It is a continuation of the Paris Conference but since apparently this conference is definitely intended to advance the cause of democracy in Empire-ruled territories and to do something in that direction, it is necessary that I should be instructed as to what to do. I shall be grateful if you will give this matter your early consideration and send me your instructions.

Yours sincerely,  
V.K. Krishna Menon

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
All India Congress Committee  
Allahabad, India.

#### 10. To Sri Krishna Sinha (Ranchi)

Bajajwadi, Wardha  
11th August 1939

My dear Sri Babu,

The other day I received a telegram informing that the condition of the hunger-striking prisoners in Bihar was serious. I wired to you on the 10th last and expected a reply about the situation. I hope you are keeping yourself fully informed about their condition. It would be a serious matter if anyone dies there. When the situation becomes grave I think the only course open will be to release them.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been to Ceylon and in the report which he has submitted to the Working Committee about his mission there there is a paragraph referring to the Budh Gaya temple. He says that there is a desire on the part of the Buddhists for transfer of control of the Budh Gaya temple to Buddhists and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru recalls the previous report of the Committee appointed by the Congress and suggests that transfer of the temple as suggested in that report would have good effect on Buddhists apart from the justice of the matter itself. I am mentioning this as when we had a talk about it at Ranchi it was considered desirable to have a Bill introduced. I think when the Bill is made ready it might possibly create an occasion for negotiation with the



Mahanth. I hope the matter is receiving your attention.

By the by, I hear that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose is busy collecting evidence against the Bihar Ministry. I do not know how far it is true nor do I know what he will do with the evidence after he has collected it. I am mentioning this for your information.

I hope to return to Ranchi on the 21st. I shall be going straight to Ramgarh where they propose opening the Training Camp for the volunteers on the 21st and shall come to Ranchi from there. I hope you all will be there and I shall get an opportunity of meeting you and your other colleagues.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

11. *From Subhas Chandra Bose*

Calcutta  
11 August 1939

DR RAJENDRAPRASAD  
WARDHA

NEWSPAPERS REPORT KIRANSHANKAR ROY AND OTHERS GONE WARDHA TO  
LODGE COMPLAINT AGAINST BIPISISY STOP HOPE YOU WILL NOT GIVE EXPARTE  
DECISION

SUBHASBOSE

12. *To Subhas Chandra Bose*

Bajajwadi  
Wardha  
11 August 1939

SUBHASBOSE  
CALCUTTA

BIPISEESE ALREADY SUPPLIED WITH COMPLAINT OF KIRANSHANKAR AND  
OTHERS STOP EXPLANATION ALREADY RECEIVED FROM BIPISEESE AND  
FURTHER PAPERS WIRED FOR HENCE NO QUESTION EXPARTE

RAJENDRAPRASAD

13. *To Subhas Chandra Bose*

Bajajwadi

Wardha

11 August 1939

SUBHASBOSE

CALCUTTA

YOUR INFORMATION UNFOUNDED REGARDING DELHI COMMITTEE WRITING

RAJENDRAPRASAD

14. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

Camp: Wardha

12 August 1939

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I desire to address you on a point which it is regretted could not be discussed while you were here. The Red Pamphlet containing the report of the proceedings of the Planning Committee has come to the [notice] of some of the members of the Working Committee and some questions have arisen [therefrom]. You gave me an interim report and asked me for extension of time for submitting the final report. The report could not be considered by the Committee at Bombay for want of time. It appears from the Pamphlet that the Planning Committee has undertaken a great deal more than was intended by the resolutions of the Working Committee. It appears also that the Committee has not only arrived at certain conclusions but has also given publicity to them, without placing them before the Working Committee, for its consideration. Some misunderstanding appears to have been created by the Committee establishing contact with Provincial Governments and asking them to give effect to its resolutions. For example, at page 70 of the Red Pamphlet there is a resolution printed regarding licensing of factories and this resolution has been communicated to local governments which have been asked or are expected to carry it out, if necessary, by legislation. Apart from the merits of the resolution of the Committee, it was never intended that the resolution should go directly to the Provincial Governments for action. You will agree that it is necessary that the Working Committee, if not the A.I.C.C., should first consider these resolutions and the Working Committee, if it so desires, should ask the Provincial Governments to take such action as may be necessary.

An objection has also been taken to your statement on the Congress policy on page 65 and to the note at page 77 for the guidance of Sub-Committees. The Congress, the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee have from time to time

passed resolutions but the Congress has not formulated its policy in the somewhat categorical terms in which it is stated in the Pamphlet. It would have been much better if all this could be discussed while you were present here. The Committee, however, has not recorded any resolution at this stage and has asked me to communicate to you its reactions on these points. We shall take up the matter at the next meeting of the Working Committee. In the meantime I hope the Secretary of the Committee will take care not to let any local government feel that it is called upon to give effect to the resolutions of the Planning Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru  
Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad.

15. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
14 August 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just received your letter of the 12th August from Wardha about the Planning Committee. I am sorry that this question could not be discussed in my presence. The red pamphlet, to which you refer, is a full record of the work done by the Planning Committee till the end of its last session. Since then a few sub-committees have met informally and some chairmen and secretaries of sub-committees have met in Bombay and Allahabad to discuss the procedure and method of work. You will remember that I sent you a brief report of what we had done in June last. I have followed by this fuller report which was sent to all the members of Working Committee.

You can form a fair idea of the scope of our activities from these collections of papers in this red book. We are trying to keep the Working Committee informed of all the activities of the National Planning Committee.

You point out that the Planning Committee seems to have undertaken much more than was intended by the resolution of the Working Committee. Probably this is correct. Yet when references are made to a plan it is difficult to draw a line. The real resolution, however, that gave birth to the Planning Committee was passed by a Conference of Ministers of Industries, which was held at the instance of the Working Committee. You will find this resolution at page 9 of the red book. It is not a very happily worded resolution, if I may say so, but it covers a

large field. It has been the experience of every country or group that has attempted planning that in order to develop a coordinated scheme a large number of subjects have to be considered together. Indeed the very idea of planning involves this extensive consideration and coordination. I do not see how planning can be approached otherwise. It is naturally open to the authority to whom the report is submitted to accept or not to accept any or all the recommendations. But it seems to me that a full consideration of various departments of national activity is essential so that a planned scheme can be drawn up. If you will refer to page 77 of the red book, paragraph 3, you will find a suggested definition of what planning is. It is true unfortunately that the Planning Committee does not consist only of disinterested experts. But we have to work with the material we have.

You refer to certain conclusions of the Committee which have been given publicity without being placed before the Working Committee. I do not quite understand your objection. Do you desire our proceedings to be kept secret till they have been approved of by the Working Committee? As a matter of fact we have tried hard to avoid any full publicity of what we do. But brief reports have been issued to the Press because a great deal of interest has been taken by the public. One of the objects of planning should be to increase public interest in this subject and to make people think of this question as a whole and not in separate compartments. It would of course be improper for any vital resolution to be thrust upon Provincial Governments before the Working Committee has approved of it. So far as I can remember all our resolutions, excepting the one on licensing, have been procedural and relate to methods of work and information to be gathered. The licensing resolution was a suggestion put forward in the December meeting and then postponed. Subsequently it came up in the June meeting and was approved of. At both these meetings some Congress Ministers were present and took part in the discussions. The resolution is in the nature of a suggestion and, in order to give effect to this, it is obvious that the Working Committee or its Parliamentary Sub-Committee should approve of it. The resolution was, therefore put to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, in July. It was also communicated for information to various Provincial Governments and States. In our letters to these Provincial Governments we informed them that the matter had been referred to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee for their consideration. The procedure adopted seems to me perfectly correct.

We have to send our proceedings to Provincial Governments because they are members of the Committee and they desire to be kept informed. In this particular matter of the licensing resolution there was no vital principle involved and as a matter of fact it is in complete consonance with previous decisions of the Working Committee, though it suggests a way for preventing the growth of foreign exploitation of India's resources within the limits of the existing constitution. In any event it was and is for the Parliamentary Sub-Committee to decide and issue their directions to the Provincial Governments. We have been informed by these Governments that they will consider this matter with the

members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee at the Conference of Ministers to be held in the near future in Poona.

You point out that an objection has been raised to the notes printed at page 65 and page 77 of the red book. The note on page 65 refers to various Congress resolutions which directly or indirectly bear on planning. From these resolutions I have drawn, what I consider, the correct conclusion. I shall be glad to know wherein it is incorrect. The note on page 77 is long and deals with many subjects. It is difficult for me to say anything about it till I know what the objections are. The first note is supposed to represent what I think is the Congress policy. The second note deals with the question, as the Planning Committee itself sees it, keeping in view the Congress outlook.

I quite agree with you that no local government should be made to feel that it is called upon to give effect to any resolutions of the Planning Committee so long as the Working Committee has not approved of them. As you will notice no such resolution, barring the suggestions on licensing, has been passed. The Planning Committee being itself a body largely constituted by the Provincial Governments, the question of bringing pressure to bear upon them in regard to any matter does not arise.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
President, A.I.C.C.  
Sadaquat Ashram, Poona.

16. *To Sri Krishna Sinha (Ranchi)*

Wardha  
14th August 1939

My dear Sri Babu,

You must have received an invitation from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to attend a Conference of Prime Ministers to be held in Poona on the 24th August. They are going to discuss there some important questions of common interests and Sardar is very anxious that you should also make it a point to attend it. He has therefore asked me to write to you specially to make it a point to attend the Conference. The Conference is only of the Prime Ministers and no other ministers will be attending.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

17. *To Anugrah Narayan Sinha*

Wardha

14th August 1939

My dear Anugrah Babu,

I have been receiving letters about nominations to the District Board. I have not been troubling you or interesting myself in these. I am however sending you a letter which I have received from Chapra for your consideration. I am not sending the cuttings which accompanied it as I believe they must have been seen by you. The desire on the part of Congressmen to become Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen is one of the most eloquent symptoms of the demoralisation that has overcome them. I would wish you not to be a party in any way to further demoralisation. When pressure was being put upon Satyanarain Babu he asked for my opinion and I told him definitely not to think of standing and I am glad he has taken the advice. I gave similar advice to Mahamaya also when he asked me. Nobody else has asked for any advice. I do not know how far Rambinod's advice is disinterested and to what extent it represents the feeling of workers of the district of Saran but as the matter has come to me I have thought it better to forward it to you.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

18. *From Subhas Chandra Bose*

14th August 1939

DR RAJENDRAPRASAD  
WARDHA

PLEASE SEND DISCIPLINARY ACTION RESOLUTION AND WIRE IF RESIGNATION  
NECESSARY OR AM AUTOMATICALLY REMOVED FROM PRESIDENCYSHIP  
BIPISEESEE

SUBHAS BOSE

19. *To Subhas Chandra Bose*

14th August 1939

SUBHASBOSE  
CALCUTTA

TELEGRAM RECEIVED RESOLUTION POSTED SATURDAY STOP RESOLUTION  
DOES NOT CONTEMPLATE RESIGNATION BUT IT WILL CERTAINLY BE GRACEFUL

AND SET GOOD EXAMPLE IF YOU RESIGN AND SUBMIT TO ACTION WHICH WORKING COMMITTEE WERE RELUCTANTLY OBLIGED TO TAKE

RAJENDRA PRASAD

20. *From S. Satyamurti*

13 Cart Road  
Simla  
14 August 1939

My dear Rajen Babuji,

I am sending you a copy of the accompanying letter which I have addressed to Mahatmaji today. It is as much addressed to you as to Mahatmaji. I desire only to add that the Congress Assembly Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly might have been usefully consulted before the Working Committee passed this resolution. I recognise that our leader Sri Bhulabhai Desai is there. I know that he is quite competent to represent our Party there. But, since it was a far-reaching decision, I venture to suggest that the Party as a whole may have been consulted. At any rate I express the hope that before any further step is taken by the Working Committee in this behalf the Party will be given a chance of expressing its opinions to you or before the Working Committee. I shall be glad to hear from you. I saw from the newspapers that you are keeping indifferent health. I hope you are now better and that you will soon be all right.

With kind regards,

Yours very sincerely,  
S. Satyamurti

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
President, Indian National Congress  
Camp: Wardha.

*Enclosure:*

(Copy of letter from S. Satyamurti to Mahatma Gandhi)

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

13 Cart Road  
Simla  
14 August 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

I am in receipt of your last letter which acted as a wet blanket on me. I see the Working Committee, evidently with your approval, has taken strong action

against Babu Subhas Chandra Bose. It is perfectly right. I hope the Provincial Congress Committees will also follow suit. But I see the Working Committee has taken no steps about the Forward Bloc and its activities. Of course you twitted me with saying that I am in favour of exceptions being made in respect of organisations. That is a concession to the arguments you put forward before me in our last talk at Delhi. Personally I am still of the opinion that the Congress constitution must provide that no member of any elected Congress Committee shall be a member of any other political organisation. But in view of what you told me, I think we should begin by prohibiting the Forward Bloc at least. I wish I could say the same thing of the other Resolution of the Working Committee calling upon the Congress Members of the Indian Legislative Assembly not to attend the next Simla session of the Assembly. Under normal circumstances I would have expressed my dissent from that Resolution publicly, but just now owing to the internal crisis in the Congress, I am anxious that nothing should be done by loyal Congressmen or [omitted] to be done by them which will in any way affect adversely the prestige and the authority of the Working Committee. Hence I am imposing a self-denying ordinance on myself and I shall not say in public either through the Press or on the platform what I feel about the Resolution. But I trust you will excuse my trespassing on your time by means of these occasionally long letters to you, for it is the only means I have of seeking to influence indirectly through you the decisions of the Working Committee on vital matters concerning the nation.

I am clearly and strongly of the opinion that this Resolution asking us not to attend the Simla session is wrong and futile. It is wrong because I feel that the Swaraj fight should be carried on on every front, including the parliamentary front. I had hoped that after long discussions among ourselves we had agreed to that programme. Indeed you wrote many times that the parliamentary mentality had come to stay in the Congress. Moreover, when in 1934 you blessed the move of the late Dr. Ansari and us who cooperated with him for capturing the Indian Legislative Assembly by putting up Congress candidates to the extent to which we could, we knew that there was an irremovable executive at the Centre and that we would be in a minority even if we captured all the seats we could; and our work here during the last five years has achieved this result that, though numerically in a minority, on all vital questions we have been in a majority and we have defeated the Government. I do not want to detail our work, but I am sure any impartial student of the work of the Congress Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly will be convinced that we have indicated the position of the Congress and shown the Government to be not only in the wrong but in a minority on all vital questions. Our rejection of the Finance Bill for five consecutive years, of the Indo-British trade pact and many other matters must convince every impartial student that we have under the limitations inevitably imposed upon us done our best to fulfil our election pledges and to increase the prestige and the influence of the Congress.

Now what has happened to justify our abstention from the Simla session of the Assembly? The first argument given is the sending of Indian troops outside India.



It is affirmed here, I do not know with what truth, that as in the past so in the present case the Leaders of Parties in the Assembly were informed through the Governors of their Provinces of the intended despatch of these troops. If so, they have followed the convention which they have followed for the last five years. I quite agree that their sending troops to Egypt and to Malaya without the consent or even the knowledge of the legislature is against their own understanding and the Congress is bound to protest against this despatch of troops, if it means as it must that India is being slowly and without our knowledge dragged into imperial wars. But what form this protest should take is the one matter for our consideration. If the Congress Party attends the Simla session of the Assembly, makes its position clear on this matter by means of Adjournment Motions, Resolutions and Questions and if in view of the unsatisfactory attitude or of the position of the Government they are able to take the House with them as most probably they will and get a vote passed against the Government in respect of this action of theirs, I consider that protest would have been far more effective. This abstention from the Assembly does not give us the same opportunity for making our protest as our presence and activities in the Assembly would have done.

The next argument given is the extension of the life of the Assembly. I am frankly surprised at this argument. No intelligent student of public affairs in India expected anything else but the extension of the Assembly for one year more in view of the hopes entertained by the Government here yet that they may be able to inaugurate Federation early in 1941. And if the life of the Assembly be extended, then our protest can only take this form that we all resign our seats and seek re-election and thereby show our protest against this extension as an undemocratic move. But whether we should take that step now depends upon various circumstances. Personally I am not in favour of that step in view of our work in the Provinces through our own Governments. But this extension will simply mean that the Assembly will carry on without us and may enact measures against the nation's interests in our absence. Of course if this step, as the Working Committee says in its Resolution, is only the first step against the perpetuation of an irresponsible executive at the Centre with a view to forcing the issue of Purna Swaraj, I suggest it is inconsistent with the vital difference of opinion between you and Babu Subhas Chandra Bose both before and after Tripuri in respect of his proposal to give an ultimatum to the British Government and take direct action at the end of the period specified in the ultimatum. You definitely differed from him in that matter and unless the Working Committee proposes to take up this issue here and now and force a fight on the Government, I fail to see how this move of abstention is likely to yield any results on the major issue.

Moreover, I desire to point out to you that on the question of Indians abroad, especially in Ceylon, South Africa and Burma the position is very acute and our countrymen and nationalists there expect us in the Assembly to do our best to support them. The All India Congress Committee thought the position of Indians in Ceylon so serious and critical that they sent their best man to Ceylon. In spite of his best endeavours he has failed and the Indians in Ceylon were

looking forward to our doing something in the Assembly. The Government of India also are doing their best in the matter and our action in the Assembly would have strengthened their hands with the Colonial Office. The same applies to the question of compensation to the victims of riots in Rangoon and Burma which is being denied by the Burma Government. We should have pressed that point on the Government of India and through them on the Government of Burma and on the Secretary of State for Burma who happens to be the person as the Secretary of State for India. Re the position of our countrymen in South Africa you are the best judge. But it does seem to me that a first class debate on this issue in the Assembly just now and a statement of its own position by the Government of India on the floor of the House would have considerably helped. There is again the question of crisis in the textile industry. There is a growing demand throughout the country supported by the Provincial Government that the Government of India should do something to reduce the duty on imported cotton and also check the dumping of Japanese and other foreign cotton yarn into this country. Then there are these Indo-Japanese trade negotiations, Indo-Burmese and Indo-Ceylon trade negotiations also in the offing. On the whole I feel we have missed the opportunity of helping our countrymen to the extent to which we as an Opposition in the Assembly would have done, by this abstention.

But I recognise the feeling in the minds of the Members of the Working Committee that the Central Government is going on ignoring the wishes of the Congress in respect of India and the next war and its desire to obtain Purna Swaraj at the earliest possible moment. I am only asking that the form of protest should be consistent with strengthening and unifying the nation for the coming struggle if it must come. The Working Committee in its Resolution includes the Provincial Governments also in this fight against war preparations but as far as I understand the constitution, there are no war preparations in the hands of Provincial Governments at all. The entire defence of the country is a Central subject and is done by the Government of India directly. So far as air raid precautions are concerned, even the Working Committee recognises that our people ought to be protected against air raids and they are right, and whatever precautions are being taken are done by the Provincial Governments and the Central Government only helps them with money and with advice wherever they feel that they ought to. Under these circumstances, I feel that the result of the Resolution will be that until we start a nationwide struggle whenever we decide to do so for Purna Swaraj the Provincial Governments will carry on unless there is a crisis forced on them in the carrying out of their legitimate duties and then the Congress Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly will be along with them. I do not want to exaggerate the effects of this particular step as this session is bound to be a short one and there are no first class issues so far intended to be brought by the Government themselves. But I may say, I was told by one of the Members of the Government here, half humorously and half seriously, that they will take advantage of our absence to rush through the Bill to establish the Federal Railway Authority, a highly controversial subject on which the Congress has

expressed very definite and very strong opinions against. The Government have till now delayed the bringing in of this measure because of their fear of an adverse vote. But what alarms me and worries me is that the Working Committee calls this the first step. What are the other steps contemplated? I do hope, Mahatmaji, after our discussions and especially after our talks at Benares some years ago which you may remember, we had come to the conclusion that the parliamentary front must be utilised to the uttermost in our fight for Purna Swaraj. I remember distinctly your telling me and other friends in an informal meeting at Benares that even if we have to resume the full struggle for Purna Swaraj by sending thousands of our people to jail, India could easily spare a few hundreds to serve in the legislatures and to carry on the fight. I can conceive of circumstances when the fight is on that Members of the Legislature will have also to practise Satyagraha and court inevitable imprisonment, but I want that when they so do, others must take their place and they must go to jail in any case as Members of the Assembly, or as Congress Ministers in the Provinces. From that point of view I am genuinely alarmed. Does it mean that the Working Committee is harking back to the original position, namely, that the parliamentary front may be ignored or left unprotected? I respectfully and strongly dissent. I do hope that whatever may happen, we shall carry on the fight on the parliamentary front to the extent to which we can and even with regard to the resignation or the removal of the Congress Ministers not because of their work but because of an inevitable conflict with the Governors. I contemplate that either we shall be Ministers or none else shall be Ministers in the Provinces so long as we command the confidence of the electorate and the alternative to our resignation shall be not other Ministries but the Governors resuming the constitution and suspending the constitution in the Provinces. That shall be the position in the Provinces. So far as the Central Assembly is concerned, we are the Opposition; we do not carry on the Government. *A fortiori*, I think we ought to be allowed to go on fighting the Government, except in the very extreme case of a real Satyagraha fight when members of the Assembly may be compelled or may choose to go to jail and even then I want others to take their place and carry on the fight.

I do hope that you will take all these circumstances into careful consideration and see that the Congress does not go back on its decision to fight the enemy on all fronts, including the parliamentary front. If you think a personal talk between you and me will help to clarify the position and if you can spare the time to give me, I shall be happy to go to Wardha at a time which is most convenient and suitable to you. In the meantime I shall be glad to hear from you as to what your reactions are to this letter of mine. I trust you are keeping well.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,  
S. Satyamurti

Mahatma Gandhiji  
Segaon, Wardha.

21. *From Dwijendra Nath Roy*

84 M. Road West  
Jamshedpur  
15 August 1939

Re: *Wire Products Workers' Strike*

Dear Rashtrapati,

Perhaps you are in receipt of our wire to you at Wardha.

Since you left this place police zulum on the peaceful picketers even in presence of S.P., S.D.O. or such other officers, is on the increase. Scenes enacted on 10th, 11th and 12th surpassed those of good old days of John Bull 1930-31 in their severity and barbarity.

Indiscriminate lathi charge, assaulting women picketers, stripping them naked, throwing them off by catching hold of their hair-tufts, legs, and pushing them on breast. Several sustained injuries both male and female. One woman picketer is lying in a precarious condition in the hospital. Total arrests and detention up to date number more than 120.

Today is the 44th day of the strike.

We wonder if these things can continue under the regime of Congress-raj.

I hope you will do the needful that good sense may prevail in our 'popular ministers'.

Yours sincerely,  
Dwijendra Nath Roy

22. *From Mohanlal Saxena*

Aminuddaula Park  
Lucknow  
15 August 1939

My dear Rajen Babu,

The Working Committee meeting is over. It has taken [a] very momentous decision and I offer my humble congratulation to you and your colleagues.

The Left elements have naturally been very much surprised and shocked by the strong attitude taken by the W.C. in regard to 9th July demonstration. Even on the 6th of August Acharya Narendra Deva had told me in a taunting manner that the W.C. shall not have the courage to take action against Subhas Babu. But we have also to be up and doing. To begin with I would suggest that you may issue a statement to the country like the one you made at Bombay. But you have to be a bit more specific regarding the necessity and nature of preparation to be made for

next fight and some sort of a time-table may have still greater effect. For instance wherever I have gone I have insisted upon the proper organisation of Mandal or Halqua Congress Committee offices, upon the need of every member of the Mandal Committee giving at least 4 days a week to regular Congress work. Every member should take charge of at least four or five villages wherein the tricolour should be hoisted at a public place and the prayers held fortnightly if not weekly. Every village to provide at least half a dozen volunteers whose principal work will be to propagate the news and views of the Congress in their villages and to maintain regular contact between the Mandal headquarters and the villages. Efforts should be made to enrol members of the Congress from every household. All this is to be done on a planned basis and within a definite period, say, before next elections. I also think Gandhi Jayanti celebration should be specially organised and celebrated this year. In fact they should be made the occasion for rallying the various forces in the country to fight under the leadership of Gandhiji. You know definite and organised attempt is being made to denounce Mahatma Gandhi. Let our slogan be that let every village give one man or woman to join the Congress army and to work for the emancipation of the country under the guidance and leadership of Gandhiji. I would welcome even Gandhiji laying down conditions for these persons and I am sure this will not only enable to gauge the real fighting strength of the Congress, but would also throw in the background our detractors. Further, this will also produce a strong impression on the British Government and public. I am afraid I have become a bit lengthy, but I have done so with the object of impressing upon you the need of some such programme. Please tell Gandhiji on my behalf that notwithstanding our weaknesses and squabbles time has come when he has once again to take the full responsibility actively and directly. Poor Sardar Sahib gets the whole blame so far and our adversaries go about preaching that it is he and his clique which want to retain power by hook or crook. Once Gandhiji assumed leadership of the Congress I feel there will be a different atmosphere. I am glad you are taking a little rest.

By the way, Punjab people had asked me to give some time to the Punjab. Now that I have not to go to Sind I can find a week or ten days. If you approve I shall go there, but I would not like to go on a lecturing tour. If you are going there I may go as an advance guard.

With respects,

Affectionately yours,  
Mohanlal

23. *From Subhas Chandra Bose*

16th August 1939

DR RAJENDRA PRASAD  
WARDHA

DOES YOUR DISCIPLINARY ACTION REMOVE ME FROM MEMBERSHIP  
BIPISEESEE AND AISEESEE STOP LEGAL EXPERTS URGE MEMBERSHIP OF BOTH

CONTINUES BEING EXOFFICIO MEMBER UNDER CONGRESS CONSTITUTION

SUBHAS BOSE

24. *From Subhas Chandra Bose*

16th August 1939

DR RAJENDRAPRASAD  
WARDHA

DOES YOUR DISCIPLINARY ACTION REMOVE ME FROM ALDERMANSHIP  
CALCUTTA CORPORATION

SUBHASBOSE

25. *From B.C. Verghese*

Mansarovar, Triplicane  
Madras

16 August 1939

Dear Friend,

From the wording of the resolution of the Working Committee regarding the conduct of Sjt. Bose as well as from the speeches of eminent Congress leaders like Sjt. Jawaharlal Nehru, two points seem to emerge.

Firstly it is stated that disciplinary action has been taken against Sjt. Bose because Bose was a member of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee Executive. It follows that if only Bose had resigned his executive position he could have organised the protest meeting with perfect impunity. Ordinary members, it is conceded, have every right to protest against, if not actually to disobey, any resolution passed by the A.I.C.C.

This argument means that if any Congressman is opposed to a resolution of the A.I.C.C. and desires to mobilise public opinion against the resolution with a view to get it amended in the next session of the A.I.C.C. he must not accept executive office.

It is possible that the majority of the members of a particular Provincial Congress Committee are opposed to a particular resolution of the A.I.C.C. This is actually the case in Bengal. The majority of the members of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee have declared themselves through meetings and statements against the two resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C. But if the majority party desire to organise meetings to win over other Congressmen all over India to

their side, the majority party must not accept executive office. The only people eligible to accept office are in the minority and these are the people who agree with the A.I.C.C.'s resolution.

But to appoint the minority in the executive office is against the whole spirit of elective executive. It is against the whole spirit of democracy. Nor is such a thing possible without radical changes in the hitherto practices of the Congress.

This anomaly places the Working Committee in an absurd and helpless position. The majority that desires to voice its disagreement with a particular resolution of the A.I.C.C. is forbidden to accept office, and the minority eligible to accept office is unable to do so.

A deadlock results, to solve which there is no constitutional provision.

The second issue raised is that Sjt. Bose is punished because he organised protest meetings in defiance of the order of the President.

This reason is valid only under two conditions. In the first place there should be a rule in the Congress constitution forbidding executive members of Provincial Congress Committees to protest against, as distinguished from disobeying, A.I.C.C. resolutions. I hope you are agreed on the point that there is a difference between protest and actual disobedience. Protest only means criticism; disobedience means rejection and defiance. By the very fact that right is given to non-executive members to protest but not to disobey, this distinction seems to be admitted by the Right Wing leaders. Excuse me for using the expression 'Right Wing leaders'.

The rule providing against protest by P.C.C. executives may be either explicit or implicit, that is, definitely stated or implied, in the constitution. If the rule were explicit then there is no meaning in insisting that Sjt. Bose is punished because he defied the orders of the President not to hold protest meetings, for, even if the President had given no warning, since the rule is explicit, Subhas Babu could have been punished for breaking a rule which is clear, definite and unequivocal—a rule about which no man can commit a mistake in interpretation.

Therefore I take it that, if at all there is any rule bearing on this point, that rule is only an implied one, that is, implied in the spirit of the constitution and in the conventions established in the course of the evolution of the great Indian National Congress.

If then the rule is only an implied one, the next question is: Who is the proper authority to interpret the constitution and say what is implied and what is not implied? Is it the A.I.C.C. or is it the Working Committee and the President? or has the right of interpretation and of action in the light of that interpretation during the recess of the A.I.C.C. been granted to the President? Only in case these rights have been granted to the President, can Sjt. Bose be blamed for not obeying the President. A man can be punished for disobedience only when the order proceeds from the proper authority.

If the Working Committee's contention is that, even though there are no specific rules at present of the kind I have mentioned, they are forced to take action against Sjt. Bose in order to preserve the discipline of the Congress at this

critical juncture. I am afraid we cannot help thinking that the action is improper. It portends danger and smacks of dictatorship. Not that we are not anxious to preserve discipline, but we hold that if there is no existing rule on a definite point the democratic practice is to make one if occasion needs it for use thereafter. I do not want to raise here the question of the propriety of framing a rule providing against protest by Executive of Provincial Congress Committees. It is an open question and opinions are divided on the point. But there cannot be two opinions on the point that it is unjust to punish a man for breaking a law that does not exist, for breaking a rule which the Working Committee thinks is desirable but which has not yet been incorporated into the Congress constitution.

I hope that you will be good enough to enlighten me on the points raised. I do not write for myself. I represent a large section of young men in Madras anxious to clarify the points raised here. We are not members of the Socialist Party or of the Forward Bloc. Our sympathies are not with the Forward Bloc or with the aims of its organiser. We have the greatest faith in Mahatmaji and in his leadership but human nature requires that our faith should be a reasoned faith.

Thanking you in advance,

Yours sincerely,  
B.C. Verghese

## 26. From Subhas Chandra Bose

16th August 1939

DR RAJENDRA PRASAD  
WARDHA

NEWSPAPERS REPORT WORKING COMMITTEE DISSOLVED BENGAL CONGRESS  
EXECUTIVE AND ELECTION TRIBUNAL KINDLY WIRE TRUTH AND RELEASE  
OFFICIAL RESOLUTION

SUBHASBOSE

## 27. From Syed Abdul Aziz

The Guest House  
Hyderabad (Deccan)  
16th August 1939

My dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

I passed through Bombay yesterday on my way to Hyderabad where I am on a short visit. I met Dalmiajee who said that he was being blamed by the interested parties connected with the Associated Cement Co. Ltd. that he keeps changing his proposal for settlement of the dispute between the Dalmia and the A.C.C. groups



of cement factories and approaches the Bihar Government to take action, while at the same time he is negotiating with the A.C.C.

Having devoted practically four months to the question of ending the ruinous rivalry I can claim to know some of the facts and circumstances which compelled Dalmiajee to adopt the course he has done. Why should he be blamed? There is nothing wrong in approaching the Government to intervene and at the same time negotiate privately and independently for a settlement with the party concerned. No party, of course, should be let down.

First both the parties entertained the proposal of fixing a quota and fair price. At one time the solution of the problem appeared to be very near on the principle proposed. Next the A.C.C. refused to consider the question of fixing the quota and the price and proposed that first a proper machinery should be devised for enforcing any settlement that may be arrived at. They proposed a Marketing Board to be set up and both parties to be represented. We agreed to this. They then proposed that they should have the preponderating and final voice in fixing and regulating the prices and other matters connected with the interests of the parties. We agreed even to this with this reservation that on a point of difference between the representatives of Dalmia group, who will always be in a minority, and the A.C.C., Chairman of the A.C.C. or any third person may decide the differences if any. The A.C.C. subsequently put forward a most astonishing proposal that Dalmia should abolish his own selling agencies and agree to let the A.C.C. sell the products even of Dalmia group of factories. In our anxiety and eagerness to end the rate-war and other rivalry which were very adversely affecting the interest of the shareholders in both and the industry itself and may even cause a disappearance of a weak party, we went as far as possible and stated our willingness to let A.C.C. sell all the products and have the control over the existing agencies of Dalmia also without discharging the old, faithful and efficient agents. We were prepared to authorise the A.C.C. to dismiss any selling agent appointed by Dalmia if the A.C.C. in the exercise of their control found it necessary to do so in the interest of all the parties concerned. Having agreed to every new and humiliating proposal put forward by the A.C.C. we were at the end confronted with another proposal, i.e., to sell all the factories except the less paying and expensive ones. The A.C.C. want to cripple Dalmia by taking away some of the factories particularly the one at Karachi, which is the most coveted one due to its manifold advantages.

Dalmiajee agreed, most reluctantly of course, to have even this possibility investigated and if a fair settlement is not made in any other way he may be compelled to sell the most paying factories. It may cause a disastrous reaction and involve the Rohtas factory also in a loss and ruin. If, God forbid, such a situation arose a very useful and promising industry in Bihar may disappear giving monopoly to one group of factories. To give further impetus to the industrial development of Bihar and to save Dalmiajee also even on private grounds as he has been a pioneer and charitably disposed it is necessary and desirable that Government should intervene and take promptly an effective

measure to bring about the termination of the rate-war and rivalry when other agencies and effects of some very leading and public-spirited persons have failed so far.

The proposed sale of the factories is no solution of the problems. It will of course benefit the A.C.C. They do not, unfortunately, seem to realise that people are becoming more and more cement-minded and there is plenty of scope for both groups of the factories to function separately with a certain amount of healthy competition to the advantage of the public, shareholders, and the industry itself.

The only satisfactory solution will be to get a reasonable quota fixed according to the producing capacity of the factories and in view of the available markets. Prices will vary in different zones, but they should be fixed with a view to enable the factories to make a reasonable profit without making the prices excessive for the consumers.

My letter, I am afraid, has become too long as I had to state certain facts from memory in order to enable you to see for yourself who is to blame at present.

I hope you are well.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Syed Abdul Aziz

28. *From Subhas Chandra Bose*

16 August 1939

DR RAJENDRAPRASAD  
WARDHA

DOES YOUR ACTION PRECLUDE ME FROM STANDING FOR ELECTION AS  
DELEGATE

SUBHASBOSE

29. *To Subhas Chandra Bose*

17th August 1939

SUBHASBOSE  
CALCUTTA

THREE TELEGRAMS RECEIVED STOP WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION DOES  
NOT INVOLVE REMOVAL FROM CORPORATION ALDERMANSHIP BUT MEANS  
CESSATION OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP OF AICICI AND BIPISISI AS BOTH ARE  
ELECTIVE CONGRESS COMMITTEES STOP DECISION REGARDING EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL AND ELECTION TRIBUNAL BEING POSTED

RAJENDRAPRASAD

30. *From Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh*

249-D, Bowbazar Street  
Calcutta,  
August 17, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I reached Calcutta yesterday.

I feel that the appointment of the Election Tribunal should be made as early as possible. At the same time I realise that it is a difficult task. I telephoned to S. Gunada Charan Sen. He tells me that he would leave Calcutta after 8 days for about 2 months; so it would not be possible for him to shoulder the responsibility.

The following six names are being suggested to you out of which you may appoint three. A short note about them is also given.

1. Prof. Kshitish Prasad Chatterji, M.A. (Cantab), Professor of Anthropology in the University of Calcutta. He went to jail during the Civil Disobedience movement in 1932. He is in the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. He is not a member of any elective Congress Committee.

2. Prof. Pryaranjan Sen, M.A., P.R.S., Professor, Calcutta University. He was Secretary of the Contai Enquiry Committee which was formed to enquire into the police excesses during the Civil Disobedience movement in 1930. He was also Secretary of the Burdwan Canal Enquiry Committee formed by the Congress. He loves and respects the Congress but has never held any elective post in a Congress Committee.

3. S. Kshitish Chandra Das Gupta of Khadi Pratisthan, Sodepur. For the last three years he has ceased to have any direct active part in Congress politics. He knows Congress constitution well. He is strict and has a constitutional bent of mind.

4. S. Benoyendra Nath Palit, M.A., B.L., Advocate, High Court, Calcutta. He is in the executive of the B.P.C.C. at present; of course he is willing to resign. He belongs to S. Kiran Shankar Roy's group. But he is considered as a man of judicial temperament and impartial. But for the present high tension in Bengal politics he would not have been objected to by anyone. Last year although he was not a member of the Tribunal yet he was unanimously appointed Office Secretary of the Tribunal without any power to vote. His services are very valuable. (If you cannot see your way to appoint him as a member, you can appoint him as a non-voting Office Secretary, so that he may be in charge of files, etc.)

5. S. Amarendra Nath Bose, M.A., Attorney-at-Law. He non-cooperated in 1921 and for several years he did not practise at all. He has begun to do so of late. He is a sincere Congressman but has kept himself aloof from holding any elective post in the Congress for several years past.

6. S. Kristopada Banerji, M.A., B.L., Pleader, Alipur. I do not know much of

him personally, but S. J. Kiran Shankar Roy knows him well and thinks he would serve as an impartial judge.

In fact all these names were discussed with Kiran Babu and he agrees about all of them.

Associated Press informs me that you have released your judgement to the Press.

I hope you are doing well.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Prafulla Chandra Ghosh

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Bajajwadi, Wardha.

### 31. From Sir S. Radhakrishnan

P 378 Southern Avenue  
Kalighat P.O.  
Calcutta  
17 August 1939

My dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

Thank you for your letter. I do hope that you will give me all the support you can. He completes 70 years and so this birthday is more important.

I agree with what you say about Wardha and Calcutta. Bombay or Madras will have to be selected. If you decide to hold the W.C. and A.I.C.C. meetings at the same place, we can more easily persuade Gandhiji to attend. It is to be a function of all parties, mainly Congress, though not exclusively.

If you select the venue, I will write to Masani, Natarajan and . . . [illegible] if it is Bombay. If it is Madras, I expect to be there about the end of the month. I will interest people there and arrange for the thing.

All that I am asking for is, celebrations on a larger scale and the presentation of the volume. India is mainly Congress and so your support is invaluable. So please select the venue and let me know. I will write to Panditji about it after I hear from you and will also take steps for a . . . [illegible] public meeting either at Madras or at Bombay.

Yours sincerely,  
S. Radhakrishnan

32. To Subhas Chandra Bose

18th August 1939

SUBHASBOSE  
38/2 ELGIN ROAD  
CALCUTTA

RESOLUTION DISQUALIFIES YOU TO BE ELECTED DELEGATE

RAJENDRAPRASAD

33. To S. Satyamurti (Simla)

Wardha

18th August 1939

My dear Shri Satyamurti,

I have received your letter dated 14th August together with a copy of letter which you have addressed to Mahatmaji. You will recollect that at the Delhi session of the All India Congress Committee last autumn a resolution was passed protesting against the expected extension of the term of the present Central Assembly and indicating in a way that the Congress would have to take some action if the extension was given. Since then the war situation has developed and the Government has sent out troops without consulting the Assembly. It is true that Shri Bhulabhai Desai was informed of the despatch of troops and his reaction wanted. I am not sure if the information was not given after the actual despatch had taken place. In any case it was a first step in actual war preparation and the Congress resolutions being what they have been during the last 2 or 3 years a protest which took the form of something more than a mere resolution was evidently required. These considerations weighed with the Working Committee in passing the resolution which you refer to. It is of course a matter on which opinions may differ as to whether the step that has been taken was at all an effective step. We did not want to take a big step and at the same time we did not like to let the opportunity go without taking serious notice of the developments and this was considered a mild but at the same time effective step which would not fail to call the attention either of the people of India or of the Government to the seriousness with which the Working Committee looked upon the developments. I have no doubt that the Congress members in the Central Assembly have done useful work in the past and would have continued to do so if they were to continue in the Assembly but a choice had to be made and it was felt that the situation demanded an action of the sort decided upon. It does not indicate scrapping or weakening of the Parliamentary programme. Any more serious step will of course have to be taken after due consideration and fullest consultation unless an emergency arises which leaves no time.

It is true that I have not been keeping well and off and on I have been getting temperature and my old trouble of asthma and cough but there is nothing to be anxious about. I am carrying on. I hope you are well.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

34. *To Krishna Ballabh Sahay (Ranchi)*

Wardha  
18th August 1939

My dear Krishna Ballabh,

Here is a letter from one who resigned his post in the Police Department during the movement. I have had to write more than once to Sri Babu about his case and similar cases but it seems that nothing has happened. I believe the Government decided to re-employ or compensate those who lost their service. If that was so the Government decision should be given effect to. It is no use keeping men running from place to place. It is much better, if nothing has to be done, to tell them so. But the Government seems to move not even at a snail's pace and I sometimes begin to wonder if anything can be got done even in such small matters.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

35. *To Sir S. Radhakrishnan*

Wardha  
18th August 1939

My dear Sir Radhakrishnan,

I have just received your letter of 17th August. I got your telegram also yesterday. It seems to me that it would take away from the value of the function as spontaneous expression by people belonging to all groups of the great respect and regard they have for Gandhiji if it is mixed up with a Congress meeting. It would appear as if people like us who are supposed to be his intimate and blind followers are trying to exploit his birthday celebrations for establishing themselves and their influence. When the dust of current politics and controversy is laid at rest there will be found a tremendous amount of good things which are of practical value not only to this country but to the world at large. Those who like you appreciate this do not concern themselves with ephemeral things of day-to-

day occurrence and controversy and it is this class of people whose goodwill will be demonstrated at the function you contemplate. I consider that to be of so great a value as not to allow the slightest risk to be taken to its being treated or held up by even unscrupulous people as a petty affair bolstered up by a section of Congressmen. I am therefore of opinion that it would not be correct to have a meeting of the All India Congress Committee or the Working Committee simultaneously with the function.

The second difficulty that I apprehend is that it will be very difficult if not impossible to induce Gandhiji to go to any place for a function like this. He is by nature opposed to any demonstration in his personal honour. I am certain that he will refuse to go to Madras or to any other place unless your persuasion has miraculous effect. I think the best thing will be for friends like you to make a public announcement and fix up a programme for the function and Congress may be asked to join. The function should be kept by itself and there should be no meeting of the All India Congress Committee or the Working Committee along with it.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

36. *From Sri Krishna Sinha*

Patna  
18 August 1939

Dear Rajendra Babu,

I am in receipt of your two letters, dated 11th and 14th August. I could not reply to your letter earlier because of the serious illness of Nilum. She is suffering from typhoid. Today is her 18th day and she is still getting high temperature. This had made me very anxious. Therefore the delay. I hope you will kindly excuse it.

I keep myself always informed about condition of the hunger-striking prisoners in jails. Ram Briksh Brahamchari has been released. Order has been passed for the release of Pandit Karyanand Sharma too. The condition of one or two, who are still in jail, is also being watched carefully.

I have asked Krishna Ballabh Babu to get a Bill for the control of the Bodh Gaya Temple drafted at once. It will be a short Bill and so there should be no difficulty in getting it drafted without any delay. I have asked him to show the draft to you before it is finally approved.

I have replied to Mahatmaji regarding Sardar Sucha Singh. He is a prisoner of the Punjab Government and so can be released only on the order of that Government. He had applied to us for his release but as the Punjab Government declined to sanction his release so we could not release him. The only thing that we could do was to put him in Class II so that he may get the ordinary comforts.

However, I am writing to the Punjab Government again recommending his release. Let us see what happens. It would be better at this stage if Mahatmaji could write to the Punjab Government for his release.

I am myself very anxious to attend the Prime Ministers' Conference at Poona. It is only Nilum's illness which makes me a bit doubtful. However, I will try my best to go there.

Yours sincerely,  
S.K. Sinha

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
Birla House, Ranchi.

### 37. To Jawaharlal Nehru

Bajajwadi  
Wardha  
18 August 1939

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
ANANDBHAWAN  
ALLAHABAD

YOU ARE INDIA'S UNOFFICIAL AMBASSADOR TO CARRY HER GREETING TO A SISTER NATION NOW [A VICTIM OF] RUTHLESS PREDATORY INSTINCTS OF A NEIGHBOUR AND HER BEST WISHES FOR CHINA'S SUCCESS IN HEROIC STRUGGLE STOP PRAYING FOR YOUR SAFE VOYAGE

RAJENDRA PRASAD

### 38. From Subhas Chandra Bose

19 August 1939

DR RAJENDRA PRASAD  
WARDHA

AM REPLYING YOUR STATEMENT REGARDING BIPISEESEE MEANWHILE REQUEST YOU GIVE BIPISEESEE FRESH OPPORTUNITY APPOINT ELECTION TRIBUNAL STOP UNITED PROVINCES APPOINTED TRIBUNAL AFTER THIRTYFIRST JULY

SUBHAS BOSE



39. *From Bibhuti Bhushan Dasgupta*

Shilpashram  
Purulia  
19 August 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

The names of the Government nominated members of the Manbhum District Board have been published on 17.8.39.

Amongst the persons nominated are Kumar Ajit Prasad Sing Deo, Khan Sahib Abdul Latif Khan, Khan Bahadur Hashemi and Sjt. Rajkishore Mahato.

Before proceeding further I would like to enlighten you about the antecedents of the gentlemen above referred to.

Kumar Ajit Prasad Sing Deo is I think well known to you. He is also well known to the people of this district for his zealous activities against the Congress. He was once the backbone of the Manbhum Association which organisation was formed mainly with the object of undermining the influence of the Congress in this district which the 'Aman Sabha' failed to do. After that it is well known to you that during the last Assembly election he not only contested vigorously the official Congress candidate but also set up other persons to contest in the Central and South Manbhum constituencies. It is, I think, needless to mention his acceptance of the Interim Ministry and again offering himself to help the Governor when last year the Congress Ministers resigned over the Political Prisoners' issue.

Then there is another gentleman, Khan Sahib Abdul Latif Khan. He was almost an unknown figure here and came into prominence during the C.D. movement. He was a terror to the villagers and the Congress Satyagrahis as well, for helping the police and the European soldiers when they travelled from village to village and belaboured the Satyagrahis and village folks indiscriminately in which this Khan Sahib also himself took active part. As the main organiser of the 'Aman Sabha' he was the right-hand man of the then Government officials of this place. He is a political turncoat of the first water. As an active organiser of the Muslim League his services were harnessed to vilify the Congress administration in season and out of season. Then at the time of the last Assembly by-election from the Santhal Parganas when his efforts to secure nomination from the Muslim League failed, he overnight turned into an admirer of the Congress and sought to hoodwink the electorate there by asserting that he was nominated by the Congress and that the Hon'ble Premier had come to the Santhal Parganas only to canvass for him, etc., etc. He was the only contestant of the official Congress candidate in the Purulia Municipal election and his version was that he stood on principle to contest the Congress on Muslim League ticket. As the President of the Bari Enquiry Committee which was purely a conspiracy of the disgruntled and reactionary elements of Purulia, he threw himself headlong into the mire to prove that Sjt. Rebati Kanto Chatterji, a tried and prominent worker of this

district, had committed dacoity and rape on a village doctor's wife and practically Sjt. Atul Babu and the district high command had shielded him and in this he hopelessly failed. During the last D.B. election people took it to be quite natural for him to vilify the Congress and to defeat it which he did with all the zeal at his command. And a man of this type has, to our utter shame, been rewarded with the post of an Assistant to the Public Prosecutor of this place and now nominated in the District Board and all these during the Congress administration!

As for Moulavi Khan Bahadur Hashemi you can well remember how he contested the official Mohamedan Congress candidate during the last Assembly election. A reactionary in politics, acting always against the Congress and the country, he is still carrying the title with pride as a token of reward for his reactionary activities.

As for Babu Raj Kishore Mahato, he was an obscure person all along. In the year 1924/25 it was on the recommendation of my father that he was selected a Congress candidate for the Manbhum District Board, and was elected to the same as a Congress member. He was all along treated generously and liberally by the Congress here [which] had helped [him] to acquire prominence in the public life of this district. But subsequently he tried to utilise this prominence for serving his own petty interests even at the cost of Congress principles. He joined in the reactionary movement which was calculated to undermine the influence of the Congress. He was for a time a prominent member of the Manbhum Association. Even then the local Congress did not deal with him harshly. Belonging as he did to a backward community, the Congress thought it would be better if he could be weaned from his reactionary activities by persuasion. So he was helped in all possible ways. But all these were of no avail. Recently some time before the last D.B. elections he tried to raise a sectarian feeling amongst his community (Mahatos of this district) with a view to ensuring his nomination as a Congress candidate. He even went to the length of threatening the Congress by announcing that his community would fight the Congress if the sectarian demands voiced by him as the spokesman of his community were not accepted by the Congress. The Congress of course did not pay heed to his sectarian demand and decided not to accept him as a Congress candidate for his harmful communal activities. It may be mentioned however that he had in fact no backing at all from the community of which he professed to be a spokesman. So it will be seen that it was due only to his reactionary and communal activities that he failed to get the nomination of the Congress. We understand he has given out that the local Congress did not accept him because of his activities in connection with the attempt of introducing Hindi in place of Bengali among the Bengali-speaking Mahatos of Manbhum. It is no doubt true that he is to some extent responsible for this movement of supplanting Bengali by Hindi among the Bengali-speaking Mahatos of Sadar Manbhum but the local Congress had no occasion to take this into consideration at the time when the selections for the D.B. election were made. We may mention that the local Congress has not up till now taken any direct interest in the language controversy that has of late been raging in this

achieve. And the persons who carry on these harmful activities, those who are wedded to the policy of exploitation of the British Imperialism, should not be recognised, appreciated or supported by any department or organisation under it. And the irony of the situation is that these nominations have been done by none other than a Congress Minister who has been elected by the people, entrusted to keep the policy of the Congress intact, apart from his being a member of the P.C.C. and A.I.C.C. Under these circumstances it is quite natural for the people to be confused, to ask in bewilderment: "Have we not fought against them while fighting with the British Government? Have they been converted, have their heart changed in the meantime? But how can it be while we still see them in the same role as they were in?"

They ask us: "How the Congress could nominate them?" We are field workers no doubt and for every action of the Ministry or the Congress authorities we are to give explanations to the people. And in this case what explanation have we to offer? What explanation have we to give to the thousand Mass workers who worked day and night for months together, half starving, to fight these very set of persons in order to make the Congress victorious? What explanation have we for the people in general who defied the temptation, threat and vile propaganda of this very set of people and made the D.B. election of this place a cent per cent success from the Congress point of view? We have no explanation—at least I do not find any. We are in a very peculiar position . . . either we are to support or condemn it. We cannot condemn it publicly as long as we are even four-anna members of the Congress, and it is obvious that we cannot support it conscientiously. If we do not try to correct this we shall be failing in our duties as it directly brings harm and disgrace to the Congress cause of this district. In doing so we have the only course left for us constitutionally and that is to approach you, to inform you and to pray that this preposterous thing which ought not to have been done must be undone at any cost if possible.

There has been a great repercussion over it which we are realising everyday. We cannot support it from any point of view. How can we? You have taught us for the last eighteen years to stand against all such things. The whole Congress organisation, the great Mahatma, have infused this thing into us and how can we do otherwise today? It is too late.

I have already referred to the peculiar position of ours. I again repeat that. I judge it purely from the point of principles. No personal or any sense of vanity plays its part in it. We cannot condemn what we think to be definitely a retrograde step towards reactionarism . . . harmful to the cause for which we are striving, while we remain within the organisation, and if it cannot be found possible to be remedied it will be falsehood on our part to remain in the organisation with a biting conscience which, we are satisfied, is not unwarranted. Our existence has no meaning if we cannot stand for principle.

I will request you to give your serious consideration over the matter. A D.B. nomination, though it is to be ignored, judging from the real issue of the Congress, cannot be taken to be a trifle thing when it concerns the vital principle

and policy and definitely harms the cause for the advancement of which alone the Congress Government has been set up.

The same view is also shared by Sjt. Atul Babu. There was a rumour regarding such nominations and he wrote to Binoda Babu explaining everything and requesting Anugrah Babu not to give effect to such an unthinkable thing if it was decided upon at all. However, under the circumstances there is no course left for us but to come out of the Congress organisation. We cannot stand and see helplessly the Congress organisation... steadily approaching the oblivion and loosing all faith of the people. To resign and sever all connection with the Congress organisation is a question of life and death for us. It is the very oxygen for our breath. It is painful... but it is more painful to see the only pleasure and dream of our life to be desecrated by our own selves.

We are awaiting your opinion anxiously. As you are the first leader of the Congress and country... I should, as I am duty bound to, acquaint you with the feelings, sentiments and reasons of the soldiers as ourselves. We constitute the rank and file of the great army for the independence of India. We are the persons who carry the message of Freedom and Hope directly to the Millions. You must know us, our actions and line of thinking; otherwise it will not be possible for you to steer the ship in the midstream of the Ocean.

Let it not be misunderstood or misconstrued in any way by you. We are working amidst great difficulty. We have been practically excommunicated by the Bengali intelligentsia of this district. The only strength behind the Congress organisation of this district is the active and unanimous support of the masses, and if by the inexpediency of ours we also lose that support and faith of the masses then where our organisation should stand?

The letter has become lengthy but in order to express myself I could not help it. Atul Babu, myself and a few others amongst us have decided to resign from all positions of the Congress organisation. The meeting of the D.C.C. has been fixed on 3rd September '39 and before that I will request you to give a kind reply to this letter.

We are not going to make a fuss about it. We shall come out as silently as possible and devote ourselves as humble workers to work out the programme of the Congress without ourselves holding any responsible positions.

As our revered leader you will find us with our humble mite in the forefront of any struggle when the clarion call for it will again come from you.

With love and best regards,

An humble servant of the country,  
Bibhuti Bhushan Dasgupta

Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

40. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

Purushottam Mansion  
Opp. Opera House  
Bombay-4  
21st August 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of the 18th August. I am afraid that C.P. affairs have been mishandled again. I wish Bhulabhai had given them no excuse or cause for withdrawing from the inquiry. They have started terrible propaganda in the Press. Anyway, we must deal with this matter effectively and quickly—otherwise the position of the ministry will be impossible and our own position will be awkward.

I have just returned from Gujarat where the situation is very critical. If there is no good rain during this week the whole of Gujarat and Kathiawar will be faced with a terrible famine. Even now there is great scarcity of fodder and water. In several places cattle are dying like flies, but we still live on hopes and we have postponed our meeting of the famine-relief till the 10th September.

I understand from our Ahmedabad Labour Office that the amount which had been earmarked from the balance of the Brindaban Gandhi Seva Sangh Sammelan for the labour work in Bihar has not yet been transferred to that office and they are in need of money. As they have been spending for that work from other accounts please arrange to send the amount settled in consultation with Thakkar Bapa and Prajapati Mishra at Brindaban to Mr. Vasawada, Secretary of our Labour Office.

Hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Birla House  
Ranchi.

41. *From the Bishop of Ranchi*

St. Albert's Seminary  
Ranchi  
21 August 1939

Dear Dr. Prasad,

On the occasion of my interview with you some time back, you expressed the wish that I might make a public statement on the position of the Catholic

Mission. I have done so and am sending a copy herewith before releasing it to the Press.

I trust the position of the Catholic Mission has been made sufficiently clear.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.)

Bishop of Ranchi

I am also enclosing a copy of the Memorandum submitted to the Primary Education Reorganisation Committee by the Catholic Bishop of Bihar.\*

\*Not included.

*Enclosure:*

(A statement by the Catholic Mission, Ranchi, on its attitude towards political parties)

21 August 1939

In these days of political strife frequent references are made in the Press and from the platform regarding the policy, aim and methods of Christian Missions. The ignorance or bias which many of those references—which it would be more accurate to call accusations—is such that it has become necessary to define once for all the attitude taken by the Catholic Mission with regard to party politics.

I restrict myself to the 'Catholic Mission' because this is the only one I am entitled to speak for. It may be useful to state at the outset that 'Catholic Mission' means here (as it does in the incriminating references spoken of above) the *Catholic Bishop and his clergy*, i.e., the body in whom vests authority with regard to religious questions.

With regard to nationalism, the Catholic Mission is in no way opposed to healthy national aspirations so long as these respect fundamental human rights and, in particular, freedom of religion. Indeed, the Catholic Mission tries to inculcate in all its adherents a sound national spirit, a sense of discipline and of loyalty towards lawfully constituted authority, at the same time as it teaches them their duty to God and their neighbour, particularly the poor and the downtrodden, according to the teaching of Christ.

With regard to political parties, barring those which it must condemn as ethically unsound, it opposes none and identifies itself with none. Just as, on the one hand, it is prepared to give its moral support to any sound educational, cultural or social reform from whichever side this emanates, so, on the other, it is determined to oppose unsound measures violating definite rights or tending to sap the foundations of the social order, whichever side might sponsor such measures.

In Chotanagpore, more particularly, the Catholic Mission neither opposes nor identifies itself with either the Congress or the Adibasi Sabha. Definite directions

on this attitude of perfect neutrality were issued to the clergy as soon as the need arose. This attitude implies that where political parties have come to face each other on mere political issues, such as the separation of Chotanagpore, the Catholic Mission stands absolutely aloof and refuses to be drawn in the contest, whatever may be the private opinion of each individual among the clergy.

With regard to the directions given to the laity under my ecclesiastical jurisdiction, I cannot express myself better than by quoting the following pronouncement, which I make my own, of Cardinal Bourne in England: "A Catholic should choose his party according to the dictates of his conscience, convinced that his choice, will enable him to serve God and his country better, and, having made a choice, he must still be master of his own soul and not be the mere servant of any party organisation, but ready to make a stand or call a halt when the sovereign interests of God or the manifest rights of the Church are in question or in peril." Consequently a Catholic would not be at liberty to join a party which f.i. definitely teaches that private property is wrong or which distinctly preaches atheism or class warfare, such as the Communist Party, but he is free to join either the Congress or the Adibasi Sabha.

One or two accusations may be answered here (many of the others are too silly, though harmful, to be mentioned).

1. The Catholic Mission has been accused of making use of political devices to further its own ends and missionaries are said to regret the days when they could make use of the machine of the state for their own purposes and when they were highly privileged.

To this I answer that we have been given, under the former administration, a fair field and free scope, and for this we are certainly grateful; but as to favours and privileges, there have been none.

Missionaries do, of course, consider it a privilege to have had the opportunity of sharing in the noble work of promoting the economic, moral, social and intellectual welfare of Indian citizens; but by what stretch of imagination can it be called a privilege to be compelled by an unwilling administration to maintain 6 Middle English schools without any grant whatsoever, as has been the case for years and is still the case in the Catholic Mission of Ranchi? or, to bear three-fourths of the cost of educating thousands of children of tax-payers in its hundreds of primary schools in the Ranchi district?

2. It has been said, and is being repeated by communally-minded persons that the Missions cater for the Christians only and neglect the non-Christians.

Anyone who cares to ascertain the facts will soon find out that all, whatever be their religion, have free access to our dispensaries, schools, etc.; that Catholic schools are open to every pupil irrespective of caste, creed or political party; that the same scale of fees applies to all; that, in fact, more than 25 per cent of the many thousands of pupils in our schools are non-Christians; and that none of them is compelled to attend religious instruction against his wish or against the wish of his guardian or parents. This may suffice for those who care to know the truth.

Under a more general aspect, I should say that neither the Catholic Mission nor its adherents are asking for any favour or privilege. What they do ask is that, as citizens of the same country who have the same love for their motherland, their fundamental rights be respected, including the right to preach their religion; that they receive equality of treatment; that no discrimination be used against them on the ground of their religion and that they be given equal financial help for equal efficiency.

In conclusion, it is my earnest hope that the foregoing statement will clear prejudices and convince all that no ground exists for the attacks that have been made. I trust also that the welcome speech of the Hon'ble the Prime Minister on this subject will bear fruit even among local propagandists.

(Sd.)

Bishop of Ranchi  
21.8.39

Copy forwarded to Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

42. *From Master Tara Singh*

21 August 1939

Sir,

My reply to Dr. Satyapal's false, mischievous and concocted charges against the Akalis are as follows:

(1) It is true that the Akalis are trying to get freedom for *jhatka* meat. There is no legal obstacle; but since the advent of the Unionist Raj, some of the communalist Muslims have grown aggressive and are putting obstacles in the religious liberty of the Sikhs. A Sikh is enjoined by religion to eat no meat which is not prepared by *jhatka* method.

I may further say that the Jhatka Bill moved in the Punjab Legislative Assembly had the unanimous support of the Congress Assembly Party. So much so that it was decided in the Congress Assembly Party that the mover be asked to move his Bill.

Dr. Alam, Mr. Mohd. Hussain and Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, M.L.A.s, were consulted in the Party and not only that they supported the Bill, but all of them said that if they would have had the chance of moving this Bill, they would gladly do it. There is nothing objectionable in it.

I may add a funny anecdote here. A few days after this question of *jhatka* was asked in the Punjab Assembly, I met Dr. Satyapal at his residence. Dr. Satyapal told me to try to bring this question more prominently before the public, for that was the best way of embarrassing the Unionist Party. At that time I had good



relations with Dr. Satyapal. I do not know how Dr. Satyapal dares to raise objection against that very action which he himself encouraged, before he fell out with the Akalis.

(2) Dr. Satyapal calls Akalis as "rabid communalists". Instead of using adjectives he should have given proofs. He made alliance with the Akalis in 1937. How Akalis and he were one at that time can be noted from this one incident that an Akali Political Conference was held in 1937 at Nankana Sahib and Dr. Satyapal presided over it. His procession was taken on an elephant. It was a grand procession and the Akalis arranged and joined it in full force. Akalis were then not "rabid communalists".

Again it can be noted by going through the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee how Akalis were consulted often in important matters. On 7th April 1937 Akalis' consent was sought in the selection of candidate for the constituency of the Punjab Legislative Assembly vacated by Sardar Jogindar Singh, M.L.A. (Central). S. Teja Singh was elected unopposed. This may also be cited as a proof of goodwill, cooperation and loyalty of the Akalis towards the Congress. Akalis were then not "rabid communalists".

Again in the by-election of district Sialkot-cum-Amritsar (General) seat, Dr. Satyapal's Working Committee profusely thanked the Akalis for their help to Dr. Satyapal in his election to the Legislative Assembly. Akalis the "rabid communalists".

Again three Akali leaders, Jathedar Udham Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, M.L.A., and S. Pratap Singh, M.L.A., were taken by Dr. Satyapal in the Peasant Committee set up by him under the orders of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee in 1937. The leaders of the "rabid communalists".

Again in the by-election of Amritsar Central (Sikh) seat, the Akalis were consulted and their help was sought in setting up a candidate on the Congress ticket. It was the ungrudging loyalty of the Akalis that won an uncontested seat for the Congress. Akalis were then not "rabid communalists".

But fortunately or unfortunately, Akalis' alliance with Dr. Satyapal broke down after a few months, for the Akalis refused to trust Dr. Satyapal and support him in his election to Presidentship of P.P.C.C. Again in the summer of 1938 Dr. Satyapal met S. Sampuran Singh on the Lahore Railway Station and said to him (S. Sampuran Singh) that he (Dr. Satyapal) wished to make up with the Akalis and requested S. Sampuran Singh to arrange rapprochement. The Akalis refused to trust Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Satyapal was defeated in the annual Congress elections a few months later. This has exasperated Dr. Satyapal and since then he is concocting lies to defame the Akalis.

(3) Dr. Satyapal says that the Akalis have made representation to Maharaja Patiala to accord special privileges to Sikhs. 'The Akalis' is too vague a term. If by this Dr. Satyapal means the 'Shromani Akali Dal', the premier organisation of the Sikhs, I can say that the charge is unfounded. The Shromani Akali Dal has so far made no representation of any sort to the Maharaja Patiala. I do not know of any other Akali organisations even, who might have made such a representa-

tion. But there are some reactionary Akalis who openly made alliance with the Unionist Party during the recent Gurdwara elections and whom Dr. Satyapal openly supported and is supporting. Of course, Dr. Satyapal is in their confidence and they have now joined the Forward Bloc of Dr. Satyapal. If they have done something of the sort, I have no knowledge of it.

(4) It is false to say that the Akalis opposed the Congress candidates in the elections of 1937. There was a pact between the Akalis and the Congress in the elections of 1937. This pact was fully honoured by both the parties everywhere except in the case of 2 seats where the Akali and the Congress candidates opposed each other against the terms of the pact.

(5) Dr. Satyapal says, "When the Ministry was formed here, they (the Akalis) were eager to find a berth there as a Minister and even as a Parliamentary Secretary. This is one of the blackest of the lies which men of Dr. Satyapal's mentality alone are capable of inventing. This is false, baseless and mischievous. One election manifesto of the Akali Party, issued long before the election, clearly states that "in case the Unionist Party returns in majority, no Sikh should join the Ministry or form any alliance with them".

(6) Dr. Satyapal says, "They (the Akalis) opposed the Congress Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 because their colour was not in the flag." Of course, a section of the Akalis led by Sardar Kharak Singh did oppose the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 but the Shromani Akali Dal and all the present Akali leaders supported the Movement. Myself and all my colleagues went to jail and the Sikhs who went to jail formed about half of the total strength of the Punjabis who went to jail. S. Kharak Singh and his companions who opposed the Movement in 1930 went out of the Shromani Akali Dal. They then joined the reactionary Sikhs and have fought Gurdwara elections with their help, cooperation and support. They have now returned to the Congress under the banner of Forward Bloc of Dr. Satyapal. It is strange that those who opposed the Congress in 1937 and afterwards, have suddenly become pure nationalists of Dr. Satyapal and Babu Subhas Chandra Bose; but those who supported the Congress have become communalists on account of the doings of the 'pure nationalists' of Dr. Satyapal's company.

(7) Dr. Satyapal says, "Master Tara Singh went so far as to say that he will not be a Sikh who will join the Congress." As usual, this is a baseless lie. I never said such words. Let Dr. Satyapal say where, at what time, and in whose presence I said so. The fact is that I have continually been a general member of the Congress since 1922. I did not see eye to eye with the Congress in the matter of the Communal Award and my opinion is still different. But I have always been opposed to boycott of the Congress on this account or any other account. As a matter of fact, the cleavage between S. Kharak Singh and myself originated in 1929 for difference of opinion on this very point. S. Kharak Singh wanted to boycott the Congress and I opposed it. The majority of the then existing Central Sikh League was with me and S. Kharak Singh and his supporters broke up the session of the Central Sikh League held at Lyallpur in 1929 at which I was

presiding.

(8) Dr. Satyapal says that the Akalis are even now trying to get into the Ministry. This is a baseless lie. I challenge Dr. Satyapal to prove it.

(9) Dr. Satyapal says, "There was a case of fraud and misappropriation of funds of Gurdwaras against Master Tara Singh and his friends but it has been hushed up because Maharaja Patiala intervened on behalf of the Akalis and requested Sir Sikander Hyat Khan to drop the case and promise is made by Akalis to inwardly support Sir Sikander Hyat though outwardly they would continue to criticise to keep up the appearance."

I shall say straight in the face of Dr. Satyapal that he is a villain who can invent such story. Not a word of his story is correct. Of course, as soon as the Unionist Party came into power they tried to start a case against me and my friends. They seized papers of accounts from various Gurdwaras and institutions and deputed a special staff to look into the affairs. They have been doing their worst to set up a case or some cases. More than two and half years have passed and the papers are still with the police. The case is neither started nor dropped. As far as I know, the legal advisers of the Government are not in favour of starting a case, but Sir Sikander is deliberately not dropping it in order to have some pressure upon me. But it is absolutely false that I or any friend of mine approached Maharaja Patiala or Sir Sikander Hyat or anybody else. I have been bitterly opposing Sir Sikander and shall continue to do so, because I know that he is a reactionary, a communalist and much worse. I request that an enquiry be made in these most mischievous, baseless and shameful lies of Dr. Satyapal and he or I must be turned out of the Congress.

As regards the suggestion that the Akalis be turned out of the Congress in order to placate the Muslims, I should say nothing. This is Dr. Satyapal's opinion. You know that in Attock and Rawalpindi districts, the Akalis are bringing the Muslims in the Congress. As regards the suggestion that to placate the communalist Muslims, it is necessary to turn out the Akalis, I can and should say only that the Congress should be above these communal considerations. This idea has occurred to Dr. Satyapal and that only after he fell out with the Akalis.

Tara Singh

The President  
All India Congress Committee  
Allahabad.

43. *From Dr. Satyapal*

42 Nisbet Road  
Lahore  
25th August 1939

My dear Shriyut Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

I am deeply obliged to you for your having given a very patient hearing to our representatives. I am further obliged to you for your kind promise to help us by

your visit at an early date.

Mahatmaji has very kindly commented on our affairs. This had deeply touched me. There is rebuke in it, there is instruction in it, and there is an inspiration for us all. But I believe that your visit is absolutely essential and I shall deem it a great favour if you will be able to soon find time because delay is complicating matters.

I am much concerned to learn that you are not keeping good health. We all pray for your always being in very good health to guide your country to its goal.

With most respectful regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Satyapal

Shriyut Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
President, Indian National Congress  
Ranchi.

*44. From Abul Kalam Azad*

Lucknow  
27 August 1939

DOCTOR RAJENDRA PRASAD  
RAMGARH  
HAZARIHAGH

STAYING HERE AT PRESENT STOP PATNA SUITABLE WIRE

ABUL KALAM AZAD

*45. From Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh*

249-D, Bowbazar Street  
Calcutta  
28th August 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

You must have seen in the Press the resolution of the Bengal Provincial Executive. It is a virtual defiance of the Working Committee. All sorts of adjectives have been used. No subordinate Committee should be allowed to function in this manner. This means end of all discipline. It will lead to complete disruption unless checked in time. I am sending you a copy of the resolution.

I have seen your reply to Subhas Babu's attack, and also your appeal for having an impartial tribunal. I think they will not respond to your appeal at all.

I do not know if you are convening a meeting of the Working Committee to deal with the war situation. I feel that there will be no war, but Germany will incorporate Denzing in the Reich.

If you do so I would like that the resolution of the Bengal Provincial Executive be a part of the agenda.

I hope you are better now.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Prafulla Chandra Ghosh

Enclosure not included.

#### 46. *From Mahatma Gandhi*

Wardhaganj  
August 28, 1939

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD  
RAMGARH  
(HAZARIBAGH)

MOST INCONVENIENT LEAVE WARDHA BUT WILL GO ANYWHERE FOR YOUR  
HEALTH WARDHA PERHAPS BEST FOR YOU BUT LET DOCTORS DECIDE

BAPU

#### 47. *To all Members of the Congress Working Committee*

Ramgarh (Hazaribagh)  
30th August 1939

Dear Friend,

The international situation has become complicated and war seems imminent. It is necessary for the Working Committee to meet and decide about the line of action to be adopted by the Congress. In fact it has been suggested that we should meet at once. I have, however, thought it desirable to watch developments so that a prematurely convened meeting of the Working Committee may not prove useless, but I have wired to all members of the Working Committee to be in readiness to meet on the 2nd or 3rd September at Ranchi on getting another telegram from me finally fixing it. If the position does not clarify the meeting may have to be put off for a later date or may have to be abandoned altogether. I have also cabled to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that his presence is needed in the country. This is just to request you to be ready to start at short notice. It may

cause you inconvenience but the circumstances are such that it cannot be helped. I would have preferred to have the meeting at Wardha to save Mahatma Gandhi the trouble and inconvenience of a journey to Ranchi from Wardha but unfortunately I am unwell and any big journey is prohibited. I have therefore to trouble him and all members of the Working Committee to come to Ranchi.

As stated above you will please await another telegram from me.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

48. *From S. Satyamurti*

"Sundra"  
Tyagarajanagar  
Madras  
30 August 1939

My dear Rajendra Prasad;

I am in receipt of your kind letter of the 18th instant from Wardha and thank you very much for the same. I am sorry to see from the papers that you are not keeping good health again. I do hope you are taking care of yourself. May I offer you my respectful and sincere congratulations on your fighting reply to Subhas Chandra Bose? I note what you say about the parliamentary programme and particularly it gave me pleasure to read your statement that there is no intention to scrap or weaken the parliamentary programme. I am clearly and emphatically of the opinion that whatever programme you may take up, including the re-starting of Civil Disobedience, the parliamentary front ought not to be neglected. Congress Ministers ought not to resign except on issues which arise in the course of their normal work, and when they do resign, there should be no other Ministry allowed to function. They should prefer being dismissed. Congress Opposition in the Central Assembly must also be allowed to function, even in spite of the fact that some of us will have to court imprisonment, and there should be others to take our place in the Central Assembly.

I do hope that you and the Congress Working Committee will take these matters into consideration when they next meet, and, if I may, I should like to have an opportunity of influencing the judgement of the Working Committee on the parliamentary programme at the proper time.

So far as the Congress resolution on war is concerned, I feel we are somewhat inconsistent. We should either agree with Mahatmaji and say that believing, as we do, in non-violence, we shall not support any war. But if you think with me it may be said that India being under British Imperialism, she cannot support any war so long as she is not assured her freedom. Somehow I think we must make

our position clearer, especially in view of the fact that we say that we want England to fight for democracy.

We cannot fight with England for democracy, unless that democracy applies to us also.

With kind regards,

Yours very sincerely,  
S. Satyamurti

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna.

#### 49. *From K.T. Shah*

#### THE NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Old Custom House  
Bombay  
31 August 1939

My dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

I am writing this to ask your instructions regarding the continuation of the work of the National Planning Committee in the event of war being declared, and the Congress Ministers resigning. As you are aware, this Committee was set up following some resolutions of the Ministers' Conference in Delhi last October, and the personnel was appointed, in the first instance, by the then Congress President. The Chairman of the Committee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, is at present out of India; and, therefore, I have no means of consulting him in the matter. If he had been here I would have consulted him and carried out his instructions in the matter. As it is, I have to write to you as the President of the Congress to let me know what should be done in regard to the work of this Committee, whether to continue it or not, even if the Congress Governments resign.

May I, in this connection, bring to your notice the precedent of our own Education Re-organisation Committee when a crisis occurred in Bihar and the United Provinces early last year. The Government had resigned, as you must be aware, and I was advised by Dr. Sinha to enquire from the Secretary to Government whether I should carry on the work, or consider the Committee as suspended. On enquiry from the then Secretary I learnt that the Committee had been duly appointed, and should carry on its work irrespective of the changes in Government. The case, however, is not exactly parallel inasmuch as, before I received this reply the Government had returned to office. Besides, in this case,

the Committee owes its origin to the Resolutions of the Ministers' Conference, and the appointment of the personnel to the President of the Congress, though it is financed by the contributions of all Provincial Governments, including the Punjab and Bengal. The situation, therefore, is peculiar, and I have deemed it necessary to request your instructions should it develop into a crisis.

Hoping to hear soon from you in this, and in regard to the E.R. Committee's work, and trusting that you are in the best of health.

Yours sincerely,  
K.T. Shah

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
President of the Congress  
Birla House  
Ranchi.

50. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

Purushottam Mansion  
Opp. Opera House  
Bombay-4  
31st August 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received three copies of your report on the Orissa complaints. I have gone through the report and although it has cost us immense trouble and also endless worry and trouble to the Ministry in Orissa, I do not know what could be done to stop this kind of scandals in future. Chintamani Misra, the author of all the mischief, is supported by Nilakantha Das, who happens to be the President of the Provincial Congress Committee. If we take action against him it is just possible that they might start defiance, and yet to ignore their misconduct is to undermine the Congress Ministry's position in Orissa. You say in your report that you have enclosed separately your conclusions without reasons which are dealt with in detail in the full report and that the report should not be published, but if it is so decided then you suggest that the conclusions may be published. I have not got the copy of your separate conclusions. The three copies that you have sent are of your full report. I do think that we must publish a good summary of the report exonerating the Ministry as much of the propaganda that has been made in the Press for a long time has got to be counteracted. You have not sent your suggestions as to what you would advise us to do in this matter. My own view is that we must take action against Chintamani Misra for carrying on this campaign of vilification against the Orissa Ministry without any reasonable evidence on which such charges could be made.



I have been anxiously awaiting your telegram fixing the final date of the meeting of the Working Committee. It has upset our programme. We had discussed the war situation at full length at Wardha in our last meeting and passed that resolution and I do not know why you should be troubled in your present state of health. We could have all met at Wardha and left you alone. I have got the considered views of the Prime Ministers' Conference who met during this last week at Poona. They are of opinion that in pursuance of the War Resolution unless a proper and adequate understanding between Britain and India is brought about with regard to the political status of India, it is not possible for the Congress Ministries to function. But situated as we are, if such an understanding is arrived at the fullest cooperation should be given. This is their considered opinion which has been arrived at after full discussion for three days. *It is of course confidential, but it is quite consistent* with the Working Committee resolution.

Your illness has been a source of anxiety at this critical juncture. I hope you will recover soon.

In the Prime Ministers' Conference the resolution passed on the question of volunteer and allied movements such as the Khaksar etc. was that the Government should organise civic guards and take steps to prohibit unauthorised organisations of uniformed volunteers. It was decided that this resolution should be submitted to the Working Committee for consideration.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai

51. *From G.D. Birla*

8 Royal Exchange Place  
Calcutta  
1st September 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am extremely sorry to hear of your ill health. I am rather worried that you should get these attacks so often. You should do something about it. But it is easier for me to make this vague suggestion. Perhaps you are taking every precaution that is necessary. And yet I feel that you are not taking sufficient precaution. Regularity about food, sleep and walk seems to me to be very essential in your case.

With reference to the question of the Temple, I now understand the position and have nothing more to say.

As regards the Working Committee, I would [like to] know where it would meet. Sardar told me on phone the other day that I should go immediately to

Ranchi if there was a war. Mahadev said on phone that I should immediately proceed to Wardha. In any case, I think the Working Committee will meet wherever Bapu would be and so I am bound to meet you. We have to take very important decisions, but I am sure Bapu would look after them. If your health does not permit, then I would suggest that the meeting should be held without you, if it is to be held at some other place besides Ranchi.

Yours sincerely,  
G.D. Birla

Rashtrapati B. Rajendra Prasadji  
Ramgarh.

*52. To the General Secretary, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee*

Ramgarh  
1st September 1939

Dear Sir,

Please let me know if the decision of the Working Committee communicated to you with my reasons for the same declaring the proceedings of the meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee dissolving the Executive Council and appointing a new one on 26th July 1939 and the appointment of the Election Tribunal by the new Executive Council null and void has been given effect to. Please also let me know if the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee or its Executive Council is in a position to appoint an impartial Election Tribunal with the consent and approval of all groups within the Provincial Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

*53. From Panchanan Basu and Sushil Chand Palit*

249-D, Bowbazar Street  
Calcutta  
2 September 1939

Dear Sir,

We are, herewith, enclosing the copy of the resolution re disciplinary action against Subhas Babu and the award of judgment of Rajendra Babu regarding the Executive Committee meeting on the 26th July, passed by a majority (213 against

138) at the special general meeting of the B.P.C.C. held on the 30th August last and the proceedings of the meeting as reported in the papers for your information and necessary actions. The resolution is, in our opinion, a clear defiance of the Working Committee and is couched in a language that bespeaks of sheer insubordination. If this state of things be further allowed to continue, we fear there will be a perfect anarchy among Congressmen and within the Congress organisation in Bengal. In view of the above facts, we would pray that the Working Committee would be pleased to take all necessary actions that it may deem proper in order to stop further disintegration of the Congress organisation in Bengal.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,  
Panchanan Basu  
Sushil Chand Palit  
Members, B.P.C.C.

Copy forwarded to the General Secretary, All India Congress Committee.

The President  
Indian National Congress.

*Enclosure:*

(Proceedings of the general meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee held at Calcutta on the 30th August 1939, as reported in newspapers)

Calcutta  
31 August 1939

Following a stormy sitting lasting more than four hours the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, at a special general meeting held at the University Institute Hall on Wednesday, ratified by 213 votes to 138 the decision taken by its Executive Council at an emergent meeting on August 25 last, deploring the recent decisions of the Congress Working Committee removing the elected President of the B.P.C.C. from his office and invalidating the election of the Provincial Executive Council and the Provincial Election Tribunal, reaffirming full confidence in Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose, hoping that even at this stage the Working Committee would reconsider and rescind its decisions and deciding that pending the final decision of the Working Committee the post of the President of the B.P.C.C. be kept vacant and all its business be transacted in consultation with Sj. Bose.

The resolution *inter alia* states:

This Committee desires to make it clear that if it were to act in consonance

with the opinion of the general public it should forthwith take the extreme step of defying the above two decisions of the Working Committee and such a step would be enthusiastically supported by the public of the Province. Nevertheless this Committee refrains from taking that extreme step at this stage because it desires to explore all possible avenues for settlement and also to carry with itself public opinion throughout India. The Committee hopes even at this stage the Working Committee will reconsider and rescind the above decisions which in this Province have brought the fair name of the Congress into disrepute, have alienated the people from the Congress in a large measure and have strengthened the hands of communal and reactionary organisations.

The 138 members who voted against the resolution belonged to the group led by Dr. B.C. Roy, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh (the two members who now represent Bengal in the Congress Working Committee) and Sj. Kiran Shankar Roy.

The votes were counted thrice. The first time the voting was by a show of hands, then the House was asked to divide, and last time the President had all the membership cards collected on his table with their votes recorded on the cards before the result of the voting was finally announced.

#### MOBBED BY CROWD

Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Sj. Kiran Shankar Roy who attended the meeting were mobbed by an excited crowd in front of the gate of the Institute as they were leaving it at the close of the meeting. As Dr. Ghosh and Sj. Roy were proceeding from the gate to their car, the excited crowd surged round them, jeering them as they proceeded, when a number of upcountrymen armed with big lathis fell upon the crowd. In the melee that took place some of the Congressmen received injuries. The excited crowd pressed round the car which Dr. Ghosh and Sj. Roy boarded when the police dispersed the crowd and made a passage for the safe exit of the car.

The B.P.C.C. adopted the following resolution:

#### RESOLUTION ADOPTED

"This meeting deplores the recent decision of the Congress Working Committee whereby the unanimously elected President of the B.P.C.C. has been removed from office in an arbitrary high-handed manner and without any justification whatsoever.

"This Committee reaffirms its full confidence in Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose and is emphatically of opinion that for the successful prosecution of Congress work in the Province, his leadership is indispensable.

"This Committee desires to draw the attention of the Working Committee to

the intense resentment and indignation that has been caused throughout the Province, not only among Congressmen, but also among the public at large by the above decision of the Working Committee. The resentment and indignation roused has created an atmosphere in which it is impossible for the vast majority of Congressmen to retain confidence in the present Working Committee. This meeting, therefore, requests the Working Committee to reconsider and rescind this decision as early as possible so that public feeling in the Province may be appeased and Congress work may be carried on with the usual vigour and enthusiasm.

### *Election Tribunal*

"This Committee deplores the recent decision of the Working Committee whereby the election of the Executive Council and of the Provincial Election Tribunal has been declared null and void on the ground that seven days' clear notice was not given for the meeting of the B.P.C.C.—a ground that is so flimsy that it will not carry conviction and will naturally give rise to [the] presumption that the decision has been influenced by a desire to strengthen the hands of the supporters of the Congress Working Committee in B.P.C.C.

"This Committee is surprised to find the President of the A.I.C.C., Dr. Rajendra Prasad, attaching so much importance to a mere technicality, when he knows full well that if another meeting of the B.P.C.C. were held, the result would be exactly the same—since the complainants are in a hopeless minority in the B.P.C.C. If this technical point be insisted on, then the former Executive Council elected on the 23rd April should also be declared null and void and the annual general meeting of the B.P.C.C. held on 23rd of April should be held over again.

### *Pant Resolution*

"This Committee would like to remind the present Working Committee of the unconstitutional and *ultra vires* character of [the] Pant resolution which was nevertheless not ruled out of order by S. J. Bose at Tripuri on the ground that a large number of members of the All India Congress Committee were in its favour and this Committee expresses the hope that in dealing with important issues, the President of the A.I.C.C. will not be guided by mere technicalities. In the present case, the Council is of opinion that in accordance with the practice and convention of the B.P.C.C., seven days' clear notice was in fact given.

"Apart from these considerations, there is another factor which makes it difficult to accept the verdict of the Working Committee. The present Working Committee is, to say the least, of doubtful validity itself. In the first place, the election of a new Congress President had taken place before the resignation of the outgoing President was accepted by the A.I.C.C.—a procedure which is unheard of in democratic institutions. Secondly, the new President should have been

elected by the general body of delegates and his election by the A.I.C.C. was obviously for a political reason, viz., that the members of the present Working Committee were not sure of commanding a majority among the delegates. Thirdly, the then President of the meeting of the A.I.C.C., Mrs. Naidu, had declared at the outset that she was going to be unconstitutional, and after this announcement of hers, the election of the new President of the A.I.C.C. took place.

"In this connection, this Committee feels that it would be failing in its duty if it did not reaffirm its full confidence in the Executive Council appointed on the 26th July and in the Provincial Election Tribunal appointed on the 30th of July 1939.

### *Request to Working Committee*

"In view of all these considerations and circumstances this Committee requests the Working Committee to reconsider [the] above decision whereby the election of the Executive Council and of the Provincial Election Tribunal has been declared null and void. If for some reason or other this is not possible then this Committee requests the Working Committee to give it another chance of electing the Tribunal, since the Provincial Election Tribunal of the U.P. was also elected after the 31st July 1939.

"In view of the fact that the infliction of punishment on the ground of indiscipline ought to be the function of the judiciary, this Committee is strongly of opinion that a Tribunal should be elected unanimously or at least by three-fourths majority by the All India Congress Committee to decide all questions of disciplinary action against the members of the A.I.C.C. and that pending the formation of such a Tribunal, the disciplinary action already taken against the members of the A.I.C.C. should be suspended and that no further disciplinary action should be taken, except by the above Tribunal.

"If the above two decisions are not reviewed and rescinded, the Committee is afraid that the situation within the Congress and without will deteriorate beyond repair. The Congress as a national institution depends for its existence and for its proper functioning on the willing allegiance of the people. Disciplinary action forcibly taken in the above manner will not strengthen discipline but will weaken it and will, instead, strengthen the forces of revolt. The reaction throughout the country to the above two decisions has so far been unfavourable to it. It is a patent fact today that the Working Committee does not command the confidence of vast masses of our countrymen. It does not command the confidence of the Left Wing of the Congress or of anti-Imperialist organisations like the Kisan Sabha, Trade Union Congress, Youth League, Students' Federation, etc. On the top of all these the disciplinary action taken against S. Bose has caused discontent even among the erstwhile supporters of the Working Committee. This Committee fails to understand how the Working Committee can function with such slender support in the country.

### *Homogeneous Cabinet*

"This Committee reiterates its strong opposition to the theory of homogeneous cabinet which is harmful to the country's cause. In view of the fact that each of the two wings in the Congress—right and left—has a definite sphere of influence and a definite following, it is neither possible nor desirable for either of them to wipe out the other. Only through cooperation between the two wings can the Congress Executive command that large measure of support and confidence which will enable it to function properly as the organ of a dynamic and revolutionary national organisation.

"This Committee feels that the way in which the Congress is being run will land the Congress and the country in disaster. Because of this and particularly because of the present international situation, it is imperatively necessary to convene a special meeting of the A.I.C.C. and a special session of the Congress at an early date, so that the whole situation may be reviewed and steps taken to restore unity within the Congress and to utilise the present situation to India's advantage.

"The Committee feels pained at the remarks made by Mahatma Gandhi in his recent statement to the effect that the disciplinary action taken against S.J. Bose is the "mildest possible". It welcomes and warmly approves of the offer made by S.J. Bose in reply to Gandhiji's statement wherein he has said that leftists will gladly sink all differences and line up behind the Working Committee if the latter adopts a bold policy and avails itself of the present favourable situation for winning Purna Swaraj for India.

### *Provincial Conference*

"In order to secure further guidance in the task of handling the situation that is likely to arise in future, this Committee resolves:

(a) That all elective Congress Committees in Bengal (particularly the District and Sub-Divisional Congress Committees) be requested to give their opinion on the two decisions of the Working Committee at an early date.

(b) That a special session of the Bengal Provincial Conference be held in Calcutta towards the end of September for considering the above matters—the question of political prisoners' release and Calcutta Municipal Amendment Act, the present international situation as well as other important problems of the day.

"This Committee desires to make it clear that if it were to act in consonance with the opinion of the general public it should forthwith take the extreme step of defying the above two decisions of the Working Committee and such a step would be enthusiastically supported by the public in the Province. Nevertheless, this Committee refrains from taking that extreme step at this stage because it

desires to explore all possible avenues of settlement and also to carry with itself public opinion throughout India. The Committee hopes that even at this stage the Working Committee will reconsider and rescind the above two decisions which in this Province have brought the fair name of the Congress into disrepute, have alienated the people from the Congress in a large measure, and have strengthened the hands of communal and reactionary organisations.

"This Committee resolves that pending the final decision of the Working Committee the post of the President of the B.P.C.C. be kept vacant and all the business of the B.P.C.C. be transacted in consultation with Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose."

Great excitement marked the proceedings of the meeting from the start to the finish.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 p.m.

#### B.P.C.C. MEETING

Sj. Hemantha Kumar Basu proposed that Sj. Rajen Dev, one of the Vice-Presidents of the B.P.C.C., be requested to preside over the meeting. Sj. Sudhansu Kumar Bose seconded the resolution which was carried.

Mr. Jalaluddin Hashemy rising on a point of order maintained that according to convention the senior-most Vice-President should preside at the meeting in the absence of the President. He proposed that Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee, who was the senior-most Vice-President, should preside.

Prof. J.L. Banerjee pointed [out] that the B.P.C.C. constitution did not contain any provision to the effect that only the senior-most Vice-President should preside in the absence of the President. The constitution made it abundantly clear that any of the Vice-Presidents could preside at the meeting. There was, therefore, no point in Mr. Hashemy's contention.

#### POINT OF ORDER RULED OUT

The President (Sj. Rajen Dev) remarked that the B.P.C.C. constitution laid down that any of the Vice-Presidents could preside at the meeting. He, therefore, ruled out Mr. Hashemy's point of order.

A member looked up to the galleries above and enquired if visitors' cards had been issued.

Mr. Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry, the Secretary, told the meeting that about one hundred visitors' cards had been issued by the office.

One of the members complained that the notice of the meeting had not been sent to his residential address but that it had been sent care of the District Congress Committee.

Mr. Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry said that they had sent letters containing the notice of the meeting according to addresses found in the office.



Mr. Naren Sen raised a point of order, questioning the validity of the meeting, on the ground that individual notice of the meeting had not been received by many. The speaker had not received any such individual notice. He therefore claimed that the meeting was invalid.

The President ruled out the point of order, pointing out that the question whether the member had received the notice of the meeting individually or not did not affect the validity of the meeting.

The president next announced that he proposed to take together the two items in the Agenda, namely, the question of disciplinary action taken against S. Subhas Chandra Bose, President of the B.P.C.C., and the decision given by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President, A.I.C.C., regarding the requisition meeting of the B.P.C.C. held on July 26 last.

Mr. Nikunja Behary Maiti, M.L.A., wanted that the two items should be taken up separately.

The President left the matter to the sense of the House.

The meeting, by 145 votes to 105, decided to take the two items together. On a point having been raised, the President asked all those who were not wearing khaddar not to participate in voting.

#### CONFIDENCE IN SJ. BOSE

S. Somenath Lahiri (Labour) next moved the main resolution, expressing full confidence in S. Subhas Chandra Bose, deploring the decisions of the Working Committee and asking the Committee to rescind its decisions.

Rising on a point of order Mr. Jalaluddin Hashemy, M.L.A., maintained that the resolution was not in order because, according to him, a subordinate body could not consider a resolution couched in such language. He referred to the expressions "high-handed, arbitrary, flimsy, and without any justification" in the resolution and maintained that a subordinate body could not consider a resolution which contained such expressions in relation to the actions of its parent body.

Mr. Niharendu Dutta Majumdar, M.L.A., maintained that the B.P.C.C. would be quite within its right to consider and pass such a resolution. The B.P.C.C., he maintained, would be perfectly within its right to pass a vote of non-confidence in the Working Committee if it so desired. That was its inherent right.

Mr. Nikunja Behary Maiti, M.L.A., maintained that the resolution moved contained many matters which were quite irrelevant to the two items in the Agenda which the House was now considering. "The resolution is completely out of order", he declared amidst ironical cheers of a large section of the meeting.

The President ruled out the point of order, maintaining that the language of the resolution was quite in order. He further pointed out that many things had been said in the resolution only by way of elaborating the points stressed in the resolution.

## CONGRESS LEADERSHIP

Sj. Somenath Lahiri next addressed the meeting in support of the resolution moved by him. He pointed out that they had expressed in the resolution in the clearest terms possible what they felt about the decisions of the Working Committee. The present internal crisis in the Congress had started long ago; it had only deepened now. He thought that the present internal crisis in the Congress was due to the fact that the present leadership of the Congress, the present Working Committee, did not believe that there was any kind of unity among the different sections and forces in the Congress. The present leadership of the Congress believed that whatever they thought best they would do, that they would issue fiats and the Congress had only to obey those fiats. It must not be understood that their love for the Congress was in any way lesser than that of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Prafulla Ghosh, or Sj. Kiran Shankar Roy.

There was exception to his remarks by a section of the meeting when Sj. Lahiri explained that he meant no reflection on or any disrespect to these leaders. What he had wanted to emphasise was that they all loved the Congress. But they found that the organisational machinery of the Congress was now being utilised and used by the present leadership of the Congress to propagate their own political ideas. A reformist mentality, an outlook of constitutionalism, a desire for compromise, largely permeated and influenced the political ideas of the present leadership of the Congress. Their attempts had been directed to drive the Leftists out of the Congress.

Seconding the resolution, Sj. Purna Chandra Das said that the punishment meted out to Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose was a punishment meted out to Bengal. It was indeed a pity that the twice elected President of the Congress should have been meted out such treatment. Mahatma Gandhi has characterised the punishment meted out to Sj. Bose as "the mildest possible". If this was not violence of language, the speaker did not know what it was.

## "SPIRIT OF DEFIANCE"

Sj. Hari Kumar Chakrabarti, in opposing the resolution, appealed for a calm and dispassionate consideration of the issues raised by the resolution placed before the House and its various implications. He wondered if the resolution could at all be called a 'resolution' or whether it was not more like a party manifesto. He remarked that the action taken against Sj. Bose was an unhappy decision. But he would ask the House to consider if a subordinate body could consider and pass a resolution couched in such language and based on such spirit. A spirit of defiance of the superior body, namely, the Working Committee, permeated the resolution all through. Did they think that any subordinate body in any organisation in the world could forward such a resolution to its superior body? If they passed this resolution, they would be doing incalculable harm to the Congress. If they really wanted to bring back Sj. Bose to the Congress, if they

really wanted that the Working Committee should rescind its decision, then this was certainly not the resolution which they should pass.

Sj. Akhil Roy of Comilla supported the resolution and said that this resolution represented the protest of the revolutionary forces in the country against the reformist mentality of the present leadership of the Congress.

#### PRESTIGE OF CONGRESS

Mr. Jalaluddin Hashemy, M.L.A., in the course of a much interrupted speech, opposed the resolution. He thought that the Working Committee had no other alternative than to pass the resolution they did. (Cries of 'Shame Shame'.) The prestige and position of the Indian National Congress, both here and abroad, would have been seriously affected if they had not decided in the way they decided. He said that the Congress was greater than any personality.

Mr. A.M.A. Zaman, M.L.A., in supporting the resolution, said that it was not surprising that Mr. Jalaluddin Hashemy should speak in the strain he had done because his leader Dr. B.C. Roy had made a pact with the Europeans in the Calcutta Corporation. . . .

#### UPROARIOUS SCENES

Exception was taken to this remark by Mr. Zaman by a section of the meeting and uproarious scenes continued for some time.

The President asked him not to drag personalities.

Sj. Umapada Majumdar moved an amendment, urging deletion of the portions of the resolution which related to the question of homogeneous cabinet and seeking to add that the feeling had been roused all over India as a result of the action taken against Sj. Bose.

#### ACTION "JUSTIFIED"

Sj. Satindra Nath Sen, in opposing the resolutions, justified the action taken by the Working Committee. He emphasised the need of discipline in Congress and thought that if Sj. Bose expressed regret for the great mistake he had done, a settlement would soon be possible. The Gandhian technique of revolution, the Gandhian technique of fight, was the only technique that had up till now been placed before the country and accepted by the Congress. Until and unless an alternative technique of fight could be placed before the country by his critics and accepted by the Congress, they had to abide by the Gandhian technique. Mahatma Gandhi's critics had not yet been able to place any alternative technique before the country.

Sj. Bankim Chandra Mookherjee, M.L.A., supported the resolution. He said that the question of discipline or spirit did not arise in this case. There was of course need of discipline in an organisation. But it must be remembered that

there was as much need of discipline on the part of members of that organisation as there was need of a sense of such discipline on the part of those who would impose that discipline. They must have a sense of proportion. Without that sense of proportion they could not be looked upon as statesmen at all. He maintained that Dr. Rajendra Prasad as President had no right to issue instructions prohibiting the demonstrations of July 9 last. He strongly criticised the drift towards constitutionalism of the present leadership of the Congress and warned the Congress leadership that if they did not even now retrace their steps and cried a halt to the drift towards constitutionalism, in no time it would be swept out of the Congress. He pointed out that after acceptance of office the Congress ministries had paid scant regard to the Congress election manifesto.

Mr. Abdus Sattar opposed the resolution and said that during the presidentship of S. Subhas Chandra Bose disciplinary action against Dr. Khare was taken and he had defended that on the ground of discipline.

After about three hours' discussions, closure was demanded and applied. S. Umapada Majumdar's amendment was lost by an overwhelming majority, only half a dozen members voting in favour of it. The original resolution, as moved by S. Somenath Lahiri, was then put to vote and carried amidst prolonged shouts of "Subhas Bose Ki Jai". The counting of votes took more than [an] hour.

#### 54. *From Mahatma Gandhi*

Wardhaganj  
September 2, 1939

RAJENDRA PRASAD  
RAMGARH  
(HAZARIBAGH)

YOUR WIRE LEAVING FOR SIMLA TONIGHT VICEROY'S INVITATION PERHAPS  
BETTER HOLD MEETING AFTER HEARING FROM ME FROM SIMLA VENUE  
ACCORDING YOUR HEALTH

BAPU

#### 55. *To all Members of the Working Committee*

Ramgarh (Hazaribagh)  
2nd September 1939

Dear Friend,

As soon as I received news yesterday morning that war was inevitable I wired to Mahatma Gandhi and asked him to fix a time and place for the meeting of the

Working Committee. Since then news has definitely come that Germany has invaded Poland—it is not known as yet whether Britain and France have declared war against Germany—but it seems almost certain that they will do it. I have received a telegram from Mahatma Gandhi despatched from Wardha on the morning of the 2nd September at 8 a.m. which is as follows:

YOUR WIRE LEAVING FOR SIMLA TONIGHT VICEROYS INVITATION  
PERHAPS BETTER HOLD MEETING AFTER HEARING FROM ME FROM SIMLA  
VENUE ACCORDING YOUR HEALTH

So I will wait for a wire from Mahatmaji who reaches Simla on the 4th and then fix a date and place for the Working Committee.

I had wired to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He has replied that he is returning soon. This morning's *Amrita Bazar Patrika* publishes a telegram that he may leave Chengtu today (2nd September). If he gets regular air service we may expect him back by 5th or 6th at the latest. You will please keep yourself in readiness to start for Working Committee at very short notice.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

56. *From Abul Kalam Azad*

Lucknow  
3 September 1939

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD  
RAMGARH  
HAZARIBAGH

REACHING CALCUTTA TOMORROW MORNING MEETING SHOULD BE CALLED  
WITHOUT DELAY WIRE CALCUTTA

ABUL KALAM AZAD

57. *From Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh*

249-D, Bowbazar Street  
Calcutta  
3 September 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have your letter of the 1st. Yesterday Bapu has proceeded to Delhi to meet the Viceroy. Sardar has also gone there. Maulana Saheb is at Lucknow. If your

health permits I would suggest meeting of the Working Committee to be convened at Delhi.

B.P.C.C. has passed a resolution which is nothing but one of defiance of the Working Committee. We see no other way but going to the logical end. If the Secretary of the Provincial Committee begins to say that the Working Committee does not enjoy the confidence of the masses we shall have to deal with it strongly.

I did not receive any serious injury—it was pushing and jostling, kurta was torn. It was organised with B.P.C.C.'s connivance if not organised by them.

If you are better I request you to come to Ranchi so that we may talk to you over the phone.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Prafulla Chandra Ghosh

58. *From Kommareddi Satyanarayana Murty*

WEST GODAVARY DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Ellore  
4 September 1939

Dear Congress President, Rajendra Babu,

Please kindly permit me to bring to your notice certain facts which have been troubling the entire rank and file of the Congress and the people in toto, in Andhra.

Following the incidents adopting disciplinary measures against Sjt. Bose which took place at Wardha the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee has issued circular No. 63 (dated 14 August 1939) to all the subordinate Committees which ran as follows:

Some Congress Committees resolved to present welcome addresses to Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose during his ensuing tour in Andhra Desa. As the All India Congress Working Committee that met recently at Wardha took disciplinary action against Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose I am hereby warning all the Congress institutions, Local Bodies and elective Congress members that no welcome addresses should be presented to him and that they should not participate in any functions organised in honour of his reception.

This circular, as soon as it was received by the subordinate Congress Committees, roused discontent against the Andhra Provincial Congress leadership and a great wave of indignation swept over the length and breadth of Andhra. This circular bars about twenty thousand elective Congress members

right from the Provincial to the Village Congress Committees and many Municipalities and District Boards from even participating in the receptions organised in honour of the great leader Subhas Babu while it is the bounden duty of one and all to honour a great leader who has rendered greater sacrifices at the altar of the country's freedom. Maybe he has trespassed the bounds of discipline about which different great people gave different interpretations—that disciplinary action was taken against Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose also might have been a fact; and yet he deserves the respect and honour which the Congress Gadi ascended by the great Tilak Maharaj, by you, and by many a beloved leader of the Indian nation, deserves. Let me bring to your notice that even Gandhijee who was so much pained at the success of Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose in the Congress Presidential contest admitted that "after all Subhas Babu is not an enemy of the country". This very fact is sufficient for a man to be honoured and in the case of Subhas Chandra Bose who has laid his everything at the feet of the Motherland, not only stands essential but remains the duty of everyone that can proudly call himself an Indian to honour him.

Even very recently when some unhappy incidents happened during Bose's visit to Patna resulting in serious injuries to Swami Sahajananda Saraswati and others, you yourself issued a statement that the harm inflicted upon Bose is nothing but harm inflicted upon your own person. Does this not and must this not apply to this circular of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee also? Kindly ponder over this.

Now you may question how and why you should respect a person who has gone against the discipline of the great organisation we adore the most. As the facts stand, the A.I.C.C. adopted certain resolutions at Bombay which in the views of some are for advancing the nation's welfare and in the view of some others to the contrary. Here the differences have come in only as differences in estimation of the situation on the national and international arena and on our tasks and achievements. As such, every Congressman is free to have his opinion on those resolutions and canvass the opinion of the Congress members in favour of these issues, to which I hope you also do not object.

The only difference came when the question of open protests against these resolutions, which you call downright condemnation, was pushed to the forefront. When the differences in the estimation of the capacity and the situations arise, the public in general should be approached and their mandate should be taken. And in case such vital questions are not brought before the public and their consensus taken, the Congress shall be held responsible for and stands charged for the losses sustained due to the improper estimations.

Unfortunately this was labelled indiscipline by the Congress Working Committee and the untoward has happened resulting in unhappier events.

After those events, the necessity of appealing to the public to support him upon the vital questions in dispute confronted Bose much more, and the Congress is faced with the problem of permitting Bose and the Left-Wingers to exercise the inherent right they have in approaching the people with their specific demand.

Even though that right is not available to them the Congress is in duty bound as a matter of courtesy to grant them the right to approach the people on such specific issues.

You yourself in one of your statements emphasised that even the opponents should be heard and his views also taken without causing any obstruction to him and why not this be applied in this case to Bose?

The circular of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee does not only bar the Congress institutions from participating in functions organised in honour of Subhas Chandra Bose but also confronts the elective Congress members with the problem as to whether they should follow an irresponsible circular in the name of discipline or keep himself loyal to the masses and establish his right to honour a great servant of the nation of Bose's calibre. In addition to this, a vast number of Congress members are indignant upon this circular and many elective members are on the point of resigning their offices.

This state of affairs is sure to bring the premier national organisation into disrepute at such a critical hour when the people have to stand by it and win complete independence.

So, I request you to kindly use your office to bring pressure upon the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee and make it withdraw Circular No. 63 issued against Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose.

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
K. Satyanarayana Murty  
President, West Godavari D.C.C.  
and Member, A.I.C.C.

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
President, Indian National Congress  
Ranchi.

59. *From Abul Kalam Azad*

Calcutta  
5th September 1939

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD  
RAMGARH  
HAZARIBAGH

BETTER FIX WORKING COMMITTEE TENTH INDEFINITENESS MUST BE ENDED  
MY PRESENCE LUCKNOW UNAVOIDABLE EIGHTH NINTH IF HEALTH PERMITS  
WHY NOT FIX LUCKNOW OR ALLAHABAD PLEASE WIRE EXPRESS

ABUL KALAM AZAD



60. *From Sardul Singh Caveeshar*

Chamberlain Road  
Lahore  
5th September 1939

Dear Sir,

In view of the European war and because some of the Provincial Governments under the Congress have identified themselves with the activities for war preparations in contravention of the resolution passed by the Congress in this connection, may I request you to kindly call immediately a meeting of the A.I.C.C. so that the whole position may be reviewed and proper instructions issued to the Congress Ministries specially and to the public in general as how to conduct themselves during the war.

Yours sincerely,  
Sardul Singh Caveeshar

Shri Rajendra Prasad  
President, Indian National Congress  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Dighaghat, Patna.

61. *To S. Solomon*

Camp: Ramgarh (Hazaribagh)  
7 September 1939

My dear Solomon,

Pray excuse the delay in acknowledging your letter dated 26th August 1939. I have been ill and unable to attend to correspondence and hence I have been able to read your letter only this morning. In the meantime much water had flowed under the bridge and there is already a war going on. I very much appreciate the note which you have sent me and there is no doubt that there are persons who are thinking more or less on similar lines regarding the perennial problem of Hindu-Muslim relations in India. Indians have heart-felt sympathies for Poland and naturally they would like her to win. This she can do only when British and French help and consequently Indians cannot but wish success also to the British and French in the present war.

During the last war also there was much talk about liberty of small nationalities and making the world safe for democracy. The result of the war was not very encouraging so far as India is concerned. I agree that when vital principles are at stake bargaining ought to have no place. We would

wish nothing more and can be expected to be satisfied with nothing less than the same freedom which England is fighting to secure for Poland should be vouchsafed and guaranteed to India. This would naturally include power to make or mar her own destiny. We are, however, deeply pondering all these considerations and I doubt not God will come to help us in right decision.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

S. Solomon, Esqr.  
Balasore.

62. *To Syed Abdul Aziz*

Camp: Ramgarh (Hazaribagh)  
7 September 1939

My dear Mr. Aziz,

I owe you an apology for not writing to you in reply to your letter of 16th August 1939. I received it at Wardha just about the time when I was leaving. I thought of writing to you after reaching Ramgarh but unfortunately on the day I arrived here I fell ill and for nearly three weeks I have been unable to attend to correspondence. I beg you to excuse me for the delay.

As regards the dispute which has been going on between Mr. Dalmia and the A.C.C., I have been myself very much interested in settlement. I had interested myself because I felt that there should be no monopoly enjoyed by any party in respect of a commodity like cement. I also felt that an enterprising industrialist like Mr. Dalmia who has got so much to his credit in our Province should be helped as far as possible. I had a long talk with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Jamnalal Bajaj when I was at Wardha. They had met Mr. Dalmia in Bombay and had discussed with him. I do not know how things stand just at present as I have not been in touch for the last three weeks or so. I think Shri Jamnalal Bajaj has taken up the matter and can be depended upon to do whatever is possible and with the help of Bombay friends like Shri Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Bhulabhai Desai. I quite see that this is no solution for the problem that Mr. Dalmia is forced to sell his factories to the A.C.C. They claim, however, that they are not re-establishing monopoly as they are purchasing only some of the factories and not all. Those factories which will remain with Mr. Dalmia will continue to produce cement and thus there will be no monopoly. I do not think this is very valid argument saying that by selling some of his factories Mr. Dalmia's capacity to compete with them is curtailed. Only within the next few days the Ministers will be arriving at Patna and I may

also be coming there when I feel somewhat better. If necessary we can then talk over matters and see what further steps can be taken.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

63. *From V.S. Dandekar*

Wardha  
9 September 1939

Sir,

On behalf of the people of Wardha, as authorised at the public meetings held on 7th and 8th September 1939, I submit the following for your consideration:

That a public meeting was convened by the Left Consolidation Committee at Wardha on 7th September in order to express the opinion of this town on war resistance and struggle for National liberation. The meeting was attended by more than 5,000 persons and the resolution to the following effect was passed unanimously:

In the opinion of this meeting of Wardha, the war that is now going on in Europe amongst the rival imperialist nations is nothing but an imperialist war meant to enhance the imperialist interests of countries like England and Germany; and therefore this meeting strongly urges upon the Indian national leaders, the people of India, that not only should they not assist the aforesaid imperialist war in any way but should also resist the Ordinance Raj now introduced by British imperialism in India, by starting immediately under the leadership of the composite Working Committee the struggle for India's independence.

That the next day a public meeting attended by 15,000 persons was held to discuss the same issues and was addressed by Senapati Bapat, Tripathi, Bharadwaj, Syt. Bose and others. Syt. Bose in his speech categorically asked the people of Wardha the following questions to which unanimous replies were given by raising up of hands and loud shouts:

- Q. (1) Do you agree that the present war in Europe is an imperialist war and the people of India should resist it as per Haripura resolution?—Yes.
- Q. (2) Do you agree that our national demand be immediately formulated and be placed before the British imperialism?—Yes.
- Q. (3) In case the national demand is not fulfilled, are you prepared to carry the struggle both for war-resistance and for national independence?—Yes.

That the meeting held on 8th September also decided to place this viewpoint before the Working Committee and have authorised me to do the same on their behalf.

Hoping to be excused,

I remain, Sir,  
Yours sincerely,  
V.S. Dandekar\*

\*President at the public meeting held on 7th and 8th September 1939 under the auspices of the Left Consolidation Committee.

64. *From Labh Singh*

Jullundur City  
12 September 1939

Respected Sir,

I have the honour to bring the following few lines to your kind notice and request an early and favourable reply.

The political conditions of the district Jullundur (Punjab), sometimes known to be the Bardoli of the Punjab, has gone [from] bad to worse and the District Congress Committee has become a source of party squabbles. The following is the exact state of affairs and I request your intervention to set things right.

On 20th June 1939 the annual election of the office-bearers of the District Congress Committee was held, when Mr. Sudershan, M.L.A., was elected President by some foul means. On assuming the role of the office he and his party began to work in their own way and the district delegates gave a notice of no-confidence vote to be moved against him and his party. A meeting for this purpose was called on 17th July 1939. At this meeting the Working Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress met at Jullundur City and by their efforts and Dr. Kitchlew's advice the matter was referred to an arbitration consisting of S. Gurmakh Singh Musafir and S. Sohan Singh Josh.

The arbitrators succeeded to bring both the groups to terms and announced that one group should have its President and the other majority by one in the District Working Committee.

Seth Sudershan and his party has again violated the arbitrators' decision and are doing according to their own will. There is complete deadlock in the district and the enrolment forms have not been given to their opponent group for which a telegram has been sent to your honour today.

The Provincial Congress Committee has been moved in the matter but to no effect. They failed to produce the joint decision of arbitrators, by which we still agree to abide. The following telegram was sent to your honour today:

PRESIDENT  
INDIAN CONGRESS  
WARDHA

IN VIEW OF KISAN MOVEMENT CONGRESS ENROLMENT DATE BE  
EXTENDED ONE MONTH MOREOVER MEMBERS FORMS NOT ISSUED  
DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS TO DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL

Hope to receive an early and favourable reply.

Yours obediently,  
Labh Singh  
General Secretary  
District Congress Committee  
Jullundur City

The President  
All India Congress Committee  
Wardha.

65. *To the Private Secretary to the Viceroy*

Camp: Wardha  
September 16, 1939

Dear Sir,

I beg to forward herewith a statement issued by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress for submission to His Excellency.

I remain,  
Yours truly,  
Rajendra Prasad

*Enclosure:*

(Statement issued by the Congress Working Committee, dated  
14 September 1939)

WAR SITUATION

Wardha  
14 September 1939

1. The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly

laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated Ordinances, passed the Government of India Act amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matter have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

2. The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilised behaviour. It has seen in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it.

3. The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use Indian resources for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If cooperation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Cooperation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic state in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

4. The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the War of 1914-18 the declared war aims were the preservation of democracy, self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very Governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of

the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that Treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent states.

5. Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain democracy was in peril and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it.

6. Again it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them.

7. If the war is to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privileges, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and Imperialism and Fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own Constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

8. The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last great war, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a reorganisation of economic relations on a

juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganisation. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

9. The Working Committee have noted that many Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

10. As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination, or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any cooperation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere.

11. In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

12. The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible



extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future.

13. War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during recent years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities, cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world, and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of Fascism and Imperialism are removed. To that end the Working Committee are prepared to give their cooperation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

14. The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the people of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

15. The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world.

66. *From Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla, Prime Minister, Central Provinces and Berar*

Nagpur

18th September 1939

My dear Rajendra Baboo,

I am extremely grateful to you for having very kindly acceded to my request contained in my letter handed over to you yesterday. I had no intention of in any way upsetting you; but what I strongly felt I gave expression to. I hope you will kindly excuse me for having used strong language in my letter.

As settled yesterday by you, I have collected all the files and left them with the Hon'ble Mr. D.P. Mishra. As soon as he receives your phone call, he will go and

explain to you all that you consider necessary in the case. I shall expect your phone call at Raipur at Phone No. 21. On receipt of it I shall return and see you.

Yours sincerely,  
R.S. Shukla

Rashtrapati Baboo Rajendra Prasad  
Wardha.

67. From B. Shiva Rao

Hyde Vale Cottage  
Simla S.W.  
21st September 1939

Dear Rajen Babu,

I was sorry to see that you have been very ill. I hope you have come back to normal.

My object in writing to you is to take the liberty of making a suggestion. You must have noticed that the Muslim League Working Committee adopted a resolution reiterating its fantastic charge of atrocities in Congress-governed Provinces on the Muslims. Each Provincial Government has, I know, issued a detailed statement refuting the charge. That, I feel, is not enough. In the first place all the statements of the Provincial Governments concerned should be brought together in a pamphlet and issued broadcast. Jinnah, for obvious reasons, has not been anxious to give much publicity to the Pirpur Report. Even *The Statesman* this morning comes out with a blunt statement that if that is all the evidence the League could produce, no case has been made out for the intervention of the Governors. *The Hindustan Times* makes a suggestion that Governors and even the Viceroy should come out with statements. Whether they will do so or not I do not know. But in my humble judgment I feel you should ask the Muslim League whether they would be prepared to have a Committee of two or three High Court Judges to investigate the charges.

The singular unanimity with which all newspapers in India, including *The Times of India* and *The Statesman*, should have urged an immediate introduction of responsibility in the Centre has certainly impressed the authorities. But the feelings in certain circles is that the resolutions of the Congress and the League Working Committees tend to cancel out each other. The Congress wants freedom and democracy, but the League wants complete abandonment of Federation, and a free exercise by Governors of their special powers in Provinces. I do not know what final view the Viceroy will take. I am told he has been greatly moved by Gandhiji's statement; but whether it will lead to anything concrete I cannot say.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,  
B. Shiva Rao

68. *From V.G. Laithwaite, Private Secretary to the Viceroy*

Viceregal Lodge  
Simla  
September 21, 1939

Dear Mr. Rajendra Prasad,

His Excellency asks me to thank you very much for your courtesy in sending him the copy of the statement issued by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress which was enclosed in your letter of 16th September to me.

Yours sincerely,  
V.G. Laithwaite

Rajendra Prasad, Esqre.

69. *From Goverdhan Sharma, Assistant Editor, "The Daily Sind News"*

Hyderabad (Sind)  
22nd September 1939

Respected Rashtrapati,

As an humble Congressman, I wish to place before you the following few lines for your earnest consideration and necessary action. I shall feel grateful if you can kindly give your views on this and favour me with your reply. Trusting that there is nothing controversial about this, I have taken the liberty of releasing a summary of this letter to the Press.

In the body of the Working Committee's resolution on the present war, the Committee has earnestly appealed to the Indian people "to end all internal conflict and controversy at this grave hour of peril and keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose, and determined to achieve freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world".

Mahatma Gandhi has also, in the course of his statement on the above resolution, expressly said that "it will be a pity if Congressmen engage themselves in petty squabbles and party strife. If anything big or worthy is to come out of the Committee's action, undivided and unquestioned loyalty from every Congressman is absolutely necessary."

With these observations before the country, I am of opinion that in the wider interests of the country, the ban imposed by the W.C. disqualifying Shri Subhas Bose and some of his party men must immediately be lifted. This is but a right step which will pave the way for a united action in every respect. Let this mental revolution be brought about in our leaders. Then I am confident that we will soon

I don't think we expected Rajaji to be satisfied with the decisions that were taken by us. I don't expect Bapu to have convinced him. The papers today report that Bapu left Simla the same day he reached there. This speedy return is interpreted variously by the Press. I suppose it is Bapu's usual impatience. If there is anything particular I hope you will keep me informed.

Mridula has written to me that she is not a member of the A.I.C.C. but she would like to attend the meeting of the A.I.C.C. In the past we have invited her to the Working Committee. You may remember her when you are inviting others. I have written to her to come and there will be no difficulty in inviting her and that I was writing to you. I hope you have written to the Premiers inviting the Ministers through them.

There is no substance in the objections raised by the Delhi P.C.C. They have disqualified those seven members after they had received our decision about the composition of their Committee. Non-payment of fees is an irregularity that can be rectified by payment. I hear men of their party got reminders to pay and these people were proceeded against without warning. Whatever the case, I have asked Sri Tyagi to look into the matter and give his decision.

When I appointed Sri Tyagi I did not know that there was anything against him. I have since made enquiries and I find that the Congress election has been set aside for some technical irregularities. He enjoys the confidence of Congressmen in the Province and is an M.L.A. If he had been convicted of any malpractices action would have been taken against him. He was invited in the last meeting of the executive though perhaps he is not its member.

As I have not heard from him since he left for Delhi I feel that the election there has gone off peacefully. I had told him to phone to me if there was any difficulty.

Jawaharlal came from Lucknow this morning. Maulana Sahib is yet at Lucknow. I am afraid he will have to remain there for some time yet. He told me there was yet some hitch in the solution of the Sunni-Shia question. The Khaksar trouble yet goes on. Maulana Sahib was not satisfied with the [softness] with which they were being treated. He thought if action was taken it should have been swift and strong.

You might have heard that the U.P.P.C.C. has appointed a War Committee to prepare the Province for any emergency. Sri Narendra Deva is the Chairman of this Committee. You know he holds in this matter views contrary to mine. He has been expressing his views if not in public in private quite freely. To have a War Committee in a Province can mean only one thing that we do put much faith in the negotiations going on. Even if it were a fact it needed no proclamation. The Central War Committee is understandable. But Provincial War Committees were not advisable at present. However as we have left these things to Jawahar we may not complain. This Committee is to go round throughout the districts. We have also fixed an all-Province kisan day.

I have read your decision about the open session of the Congress. I think there was no harm in postponement considering the war situation. If it had been postponed things might have cleared up a little bit.

How is your health at present?  
With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,  
J.B. Kripalani

*72. From Lord Linlithgow*

Simla  
27 September 1939

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD  
PRESIDENT INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS  
WARDHA

I SHOULD BE VERY GLAD IF YOU COULD COME TO SEE ME AT DELHI ON OCTOBER THIRD IF THAT DATE IS CONVENIENT FOR YOU I WILL SUGGEST A TIME LATER IF IT IS NOT I WILL SUGGEST A DIFFERENT DATE I AM ALSO INVITING PANDIT NEHRU

LINLITHGOW

*73. To Achint Ram*

Camp: Wardha  
September 27, 1939

My dear Achint Ramji,

I have received a letter from Shri Ramnath of Ludhiana which I am enclosing. I receive complaints now and then from the Punjab. I do not know how to deal with these complaints. It is difficult to do anything from here to give satisfaction to these complaints but it should be the look-out of you all to so conduct the affairs as not to give any reasonable cause for complaint.

When Sardar Mangal Singh was here sometime ago, he asked me to visit Punjab and to bring about reconciliation between the parties. Having had some experience of the strong feelings existing there and knowing how difficult it was to settle these differences I was reluctant, but ultimately agreed to visit Punjab if my health would permit it. Unfortunately since then instead of improving my health has definitely deteriorated. Therefore it is not possible for me to come over there in near future.

I do hope that you all will do something to remove all just complaints. I shall be glad to hear from you as to how things stand there. Please return this letter with your reply.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

74. *From Lord Linlithgow*

Simla

29 September 1939

DR RAJENDRA PRASAD  
WARDHAGANJ

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR TELEGRAM I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AND PANDIT NEHRU ON TUESDAY THIRD OCTOBER AND SUGGEST MEETING MIGHT BE AT TEN FORTYFIVE A M AT VICEROY'S HOUSE NEW DELHI

LINLITHGOW

75. *From V.G. Laithwaite, Private Secretary to the Viceroy*

The Viceroy's House  
New Delhi  
2nd October 1939

Dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

As His Excellency has never had the pleasure of meeting you, and as he has only once met Pandit Nehru, he would propose, if you agree, to have a 5 minutes' personal talk with each of you individually before starting to discuss business with you jointly tomorrow.

If this is convenient to you please do not trouble to reply. I shall look forward to meeting you at the Viceroy's House as arranged at 10.45 tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,  
V.G. Laithwaite

76. *To V.G. Laithwaite, Private Secretary to the Viceroy*

Camp: Birla House  
New Delhi  
4 October 1939

Dear Mr. Laithwaite,

I thank you very much for your D.O. No. 5496 dated 3rd October 1939 and note that it is His Excellency's desire to take counsel with other representative persons in connection with the present situation before reaching any conclusion. We would have gladly put off the meetings of the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee. But as the meetings had been notified sometime

before the interview we had with His Excellency yesterday was arranged, any long postponement may be misunderstood and may give rise to speculation. We have therefore decided to adhere to the original time table. It is not, however, our intention to hurry things, considering the graver issues involved, and we shall advise the All India Congress Committee not to take any final decisions.

We shall be leaving tomorrow the 5th October 1939 evening by the Grand Trunk Express for Wardha.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

*77. From V.G. Laithwaite*

The Viceroy's House  
New Delhi  
4th October 1939

Dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

His Excellency desires me to thank you very much for your courteous reply to my letter of 3rd October.

Yours sincerely,  
Laithwaite  
Private Secretary to Viceroy

Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

*78. To Mohammad Ali Jinnah*

Birla House  
New Delhi  
October 5, 1939

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

In the resolution of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, passed recently in Delhi, reference has been made to Provincial Governments. It is stated that Provincial Autonomy in several Provinces has resulted in the domination of the Hindus over the Muslim minorities whose life and liberty, property and honour are in danger, and even their religious rights and culture are being assailed and annihilated every day under the Congress Governments in various Provinces. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has also informed me that you mentioned this matter to him in the course of a recent conversation.

We feel that these charges are wholly unfounded and are based on misapprehension and one-sided reports that might have reached you and the League. The Governments concerned have inquired into the matter whenever such charges have been made and have denied them. On a previous occasion we expressed our willingness to have any specific instances investigated by impartial authority. We feel strongly, and I am sure, you will agree with us, that such charges, when seriously made, should be inquired into and either substantiated or disproved. We would like this course to be adopted in regard to any specific instances that are put forward. If you agree, we could request the highest judicial authority in India, Sir M. Gwyer, Chief Justice of the Federal Court, to inquire into this matter. In the event of his not being available, some other person of a similar status and judicial position might be approached.

I shall gladly place this matter before the Working Committee of the Congress and get them to pass a formal resolution to this effect.

I am leaving for Wardha today and shall be obliged to you if you will send an early reply. I shall be in Wardha for about a week.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

79. *From Mohammad Ali Jinnah*

8-B, Hardinge Avenue  
New Delhi  
October 6, 1939

Dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

I am in receipt of your letter dated October 5, 1939. I beg to inform you that I have already placed the whole case before the Viceroy and the Governor-General and have requested him to take up the matter without delay as he and the Governors of the Provinces have been expressly authorised under the Constitution and are entrusted with the responsibility to protect the rights and the interests of the minorities.

The matter is now under His Excellency's consideration and he is the proper authority to take such action and adopt such measures as would meet our requirements and would restore complete sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans in those Provinces where the Congress Ministries are in charge of the administration.

In these circumstances, I do not wish to discuss further the various statements made in your letter as it is unnecessary to do so, but I must say that some of them are wholly inaccurate.

Yours sincerely,  
M.A. Jinnah



80. To V.G. Laithwaite, Private Secretary to the Viceroy

Camp: Wardha  
October 11, 1939

Dear Mr. Laithwaite,

I beg to forward copy of a resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee at its meeting held at Wardha on the 9th and 10th October 1939 for submission to His Excellency.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure:

(Proceedings of a meeting of the All India Congress Committee  
held at Wardha on 9 and 10 October 1939)

A meeting of the All India Congress Committee was held at Wardha on October 9 and 10, 1939, in Navbharat Vidyalaya. Babu Rajendra Prasad presided.

269 members out of a total of 418 were present. The Province-wise attendance was as follows:

|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Ajmer            | 5  |
| Andhra           | 25 |
| Assam            | 5  |
| Bihar            | 26 |
| Bengal           | 45 |
| Bombay           | 5  |
| Delhi            | 2  |
| Gujarat          | 14 |
| Karnataka        | 9  |
| Kerala           | 8  |
| Mahakoshal       | 12 |
| Maharashtra      | 19 |
| Nagpur           | 5  |
| N.W.F.P.         | 1  |
| Punjab           | 13 |
| Sind             | 4  |
| Tamil Nadu       | 23 |
| United Provinces | 33 |
| Utkal            | 10 |
| Vidarbha         | 5  |
| Ex-Presidents    | 5  |

Total

274

Before commencing the proceedings Babu Rajendra Prasad explained in brief the object for which the meeting was called:

“We are meeting here to discuss the situation which has arisen out of the war. The Congress and the All India Congress Committee have from time to time passed resolutions defining our attitude. These resolutions except the last one were passed at a time when war was a possibility but was not actually going on. The latest statement of Working Committee was adopted after the declaration of war. You will have seen from that statement that we have asked the British Government to declare and define their war aims, with particular reference to India, in unequivocal terms. The present war, we are all aware, is being waged by England and France against Germany. The declared objective is to free Europe from the constant fear of Nazi aggression and generally to secure freedom for all nationalities. We have expressed our detestation of Nazi methods of aggression on many occasions. We have also expressed our sympathy in unmistakable terms with all those countries which have from time to time been made the victims of unprovoked attacks. We protested when Abyssinia was attacked. We expressed our sympathy with the democratic forces in Spain. We protested against the conquest and annexation of Czechoslovakia. We have expressed our sympathy with all the suffering nations. We have thus made our position perfectly clear. What we want is clarification of the position of the allies and particularly of England. We are aware that in the past there have been occasions when the avowed objects for which a war was fought were not the real objects. The last great war, fought with slogans of self-determination and ‘making the world safe for democracy’, did not fulfil any of these objects. We are, therefore, naturally doubtful if the professed aims of the present war are its real aims.

“India at the present moment is not an independent country. If it were independent it would have considered whether it should join the present war. Many other countries which sympathise with Poland have not joined the war and it is possible that with all our sympathy with Poland and with the best wish in the world to save the cause of democracy, we might have decided in favour of neutrality. If India is asked to help in a war for restoring and guaranteeing the freedom of Poland, is it any wonder that India should ask to be made free before she can render any help? It is no question of bargaining or taking advantage of the difficulties of England. It is a simple and straightforward question that India asks. What part or lot can she have in a war waged for the freedom of other countries when her own freedom is denied to her by people who are fighting for freedom and democracy in Europe? We want a straight answer to that question. We have also said that a mere declaration will not satisfy us. We want that declaration to be given effect to to the extent it is possible under present conditions. We see that there are individual groups, parties and communities in India who have put forward their own claims to be considered. If the British Government and statesmen once make up their mind to deal fairly with India and to give effect to the ideas which they profess in regard to the war it should not be difficult for

them to evolve a formula that can satisfy all parties and groups.

"The resolution which the Working Committee will soon place before you asks you to endorse the statement of the Working Committee and authorise the Committee to take such steps as may be necessary to deal with the situation as it may arise in the present war crisis."

#### MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. held at Bombay were confirmed.

#### RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions recommended by the Working Committee with some slight verbal changes were passed:

##### *War Crisis*

The declaration of war in Europe has created an international situation of the gravest import to the world and to India, and the All India Congress Committee charged with the heavy responsibility of guiding the people of India in this moment of world crisis, has sought guidance from the principles and declarations of the Congress in considering this grave situation. The Congress has been guided throughout by its objective of achieving the independence of the Indian people and the establishment of a free democratic state in India wherein the rights and interests of all minorities are reserved and safeguarded. The means it has adopted in its struggles and activities have been peaceful and legitimate, and it has looked upon war and violence with horror and as opposed to progress and civilisation. In particular, the Congress declared itself opposed to all imperialist wars and to the domination of one country over another.

In spite of the repeated declarations of the Congress in regard to war, the British Government have declared India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people, and various far-reaching measures have been hurried through the legislatures and promulgated in the forms of ordinances vitally affecting them and circumscribing and limiting the powers of the Provincial Governments.

The All India Congress Committee, however, does not wish to take any final decision precipitately and without giving every opportunity for the war and peace aims of the British Government to be clarified, with particular reference to India. The Committee approves of and endorses the statement issued by the Working Committee on September 14, 1939 on the war crisis, and repeats the invitation contained therein to the British Government to state their war aims and peace aims.

While the Committee condemns Fascism and Nazi aggression, it is convinced

that peace and freedom can only be established and preserved by an extension of democracy to all colonial countries and by the application of the principle of self-determination to them so as to eliminate imperialist control. In particular, India must be declared an independent nation and present application should be given to this status to the largest possible extent. The A.I.C.C. earnestly trust that this declaration will be made by the British Government in any statement that it may make in regard to its war and peace aims.

The Committee desire to declare afresh that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities to which the Congress has always pledged itself.

The Committee approves of the formation by the Working Committee of the War Emergency Sub-Committee and authorises the Working Committee to take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to this resolution and to their statement on the war crisis.

### *The Next Congress and Elections*

In view of the crisis that has arisen and the necessity of preparing the nation to meet such developments as might take place, and avoiding the distraction of elections at a time of national emergency, the A.I.C.C. resolves that the annual session of the Congress, which was fixed to take place during the last week of December, be postponed to the second fortnight in March. The Congress delegate elections, the election for the new A.I.C.C., and the Presidential election will stand postponed till such time as may be fixed later.

As, however, it may be considered necessary, in order to consider vital issues affecting the nation, to have a session of the Congress at an earlier date, a special session of the Congress may be convened by the Working Committee during the last week of December or at any other suitable time. The Working Committee is authorised to decide about the necessity of such a special session and to fix the dates and the venue for it. In the event of such a special session being held provision shall be made for delegates only, and the present delegates to the Congress shall be entitled to attend it. The A.I.C.C. for the current year will function as the Subject Committee for the special session.

### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

The A.I.C.C. office had received notice of 46 non-official resolutions to be moved at the meeting. According to the Constitution one full day is set apart for the consideration of the non-official resolutions. The President however explained to the Committee that in view of the special purpose for which the meeting was called it was not advisable that their attention be distracted by other matters. He suggested that if the Committee was agreeable, the non-official resolutions given notice of may not be taken up for consideration. The Committee accepted the suggestion and the non-official resolutions were

dropped. Before the meeting dispersed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Babu Rajendra Prasad explained once again the deep significance and the far-reaching implications of the present crisis and the necessity for united action.

81. *To Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE, ALLAHABAD

Camp: Wardha  
13 October 1939

My dear Jawaharlal & Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

I am enclosing copy of a letter I have written to Maulana Azad. I shall be obliged for your views in the matter. I am leaving this evening and after staying at Benaras on the 15th and 16th I shall be reaching Patna on 17th evening. I shall be staying with Babu Shiva Prasad Gupta at Benaras.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

82. *From J.B. Kripalani*

Wardha  
13 October 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

You know my views about non-violence and the social and political reconstruction of India. They are the same in which we have been working for the last many years under Gandhiji's lead. Recent discussions in the Working Committee on the war crisis raise an apprehension that the Congress policies may be reversed with regard to non-violence and the social and political reconstruction of our country. In such an eventuality I would like to inform you that it will not be possible for me to continue to be a member of the Working Committee. I need not assure you that if I have to resign, I shall do nothing that will in any way be injurious to the prestige of the Congress.

Yours sincerely,  
J.B. Kripalani

83. *From Sankarrao Deo*

Camp: Wardha  
13 October 1939

Dear Rajendrababu,

You know my personal views on non-violence and the political and social reconstruction of future India based on it. I had given expression to these views during the discussion on the Congress attitude towards the present war in the last two meetings of the Working Committee. I know the value and realise the necessity of the Working Committee speaking with one voice at this critical juncture. From the trend of the discussions and the statement issued by the Working Committee on the present crisis I am afraid ultimately Congress will be involved into an action which is not consistent with its creed of non-violence. In that eventuality I will not be able to go with the present Working Committee consistent with my creed of non-violence. I intend to resign if it comes to that.

Yours sincerely,  
S.D. Deo

84. *From Lord Linlithgow*

SECRET

The Viceroy's House  
New Delhi  
16 October 1939

Dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

I have now concluded my conversations which I had been having in the course of which I had a talk with Mr. Rajagopalachariar when I saw him a day or two ago. I am now in a position in the light of discussions with the Secretary of State and the Cabinet to make a statement. I think it only courteous to let you have an advance copy of that statement, which will be published in the morning papers of Wednesday, and I will be sending also a copy personally to Mr. Gandhi. Be so good as to regard it as confidential and personal till then.

2. You may, I fear, feel that it does not go at all as far as you will have wished, and, as you will see from its text, I fully recognize that that is the case. I would only add that I have throughout been fully conscious of your view, but that if I have not, in the light of the other considerations to which it has been necessary to give weight, been able, on behalf of H.M.G., to go further than the declaration represents, it has not been for any lack of appreciation of the points to which I

know you attach importance, or for any failure on my part to give those points the weight they deserve in my discussions either with yourself or with others.

Yours sincerely,  
Linlithgow

*Enclosure:*

(Statement dated New Delhi the 18th October 1939 by  
His Excellency the Viceroy)

[Not to be published before the morning of Wednesday, 18th October. Not to be published in Dak editions of 17th October. Simultaneous publication in the United Kingdom has been arranged.]

Since the outbreak of war and more particularly, during the last four weeks, I have been in the closest touch with the leaders of political opinion in British India and with representatives of the Princely Order: and I have spared no effort to acquaint myself by personal discussion with the trend of feeling; to ascertain the views of the different sections of public opinion in this country on the great questions of the day; and in particular on this question of the basis on which, and the extent to which, India could best cooperate in the prosecution of the war; and to satisfy myself as to the extent to which a basis of common agreement exists, and as to the manner in which the position, so far as it may still remain obscure, can best be clarified. Matters have now reached a point at which, in my judgment, it would be well that I should make a statement designed, in the light of the discussions which I have had during these past few weeks, to clear the position on the main questions which emerge at the present moment. I would make a preliminary observation. I have had the advantage of a full and frank discussion with no fewer than 52 people—with Mr. Gandhi, with the President and Members of the Congress Working Committee, with Mr. Jinnah and with representative Members of the Muslim League organisation, with the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, and with a great variety of persons prominent in the political life of British India.

As was only to be expected, conversations with representatives of so many different points of view revealed marked differences of outlook, markedly different demands, and markedly different solutions for the problems that lie before us. Again, and that too was what might have been expected at a time such as the present, reservations or demands for special protection on one side have tended to be balanced by proposals for still more marked constitutional changes on another. I would ask that these differences of view, deeply and sincerely held, I have not the least doubt, by those who have advanced them to me, should be

entering into the war, and consequently the broad general objectives which we have before us in the campaign which is now being waged. We are fighting to resist aggression whether directed against ourselves or others. Our general aims have been stated by the Prime Minister within the last few days as follows: "We are seeking no material advantage for ourselves. We are not aiming only at victory, but looking beyond it to laying a foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of each succeeding generation. We, like all the peoples of Europe, long for peace; but it must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and threat." This statement, I think, clearly establishes the nature of the cause for which we are fighting, and justifies, if justification is needed, the extension by India of her moral support and her goodwill to the prosecution of that cause.

Let me turn now to the second question which has been put to me—the question of India's future and of the lines of her constitutional development. That is a question, I am certain in the light of my conversations, which is of the greatest and most acute interest to all parties and all sections of opinion in this country. As matters stand today, the constitutional position of India and the policy of His Majesty's Government is governed by the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Part III of that Act, which provides for the conferment of Provincial Autonomy on the Provinces of British India, has been implemented. For nearly 2½ years now the Provinces have been conducting their own affairs under the scheme of the Act. That they have done so, on the whole, with great success, even if now and then difficulties have arisen, no one can question. Whatever the political party in power in those Provinces, all can look with satisfaction on a distinguished record of public achievement during the last 2½ years. The experience that they have had has shown beyond any question that whatever minor problems the application of the scheme of the Act may have presented, whatever difficulties may have confronted us in the operation of the Act from time to time in the provincial sphere, the scheme of the Act is essentially sound, and that it transfers great power and gives great opportunities to popularly elected governments dependent on the support of a majority in their legislatures.

The second stage contemplated by the Act was the reconstitution of the Central Government on such a basis as to achieve the essential goal of Indian unity. The method contemplated for that purpose was the achievement of a Federation of All-India, in which the representatives of all political parties in British India would, together with the Rulers of the Indian States, form a unified Government of India as a whole. I am only too conscious of the severity of the criticisms that have been advanced from many different points of view against the federal scheme and against the arrangements embodied in Part II of the Act. I will say today no more than that, having myself had so close a familiarity not only with the framing of the provisions, but with the preliminary work which has been done with a view to putting them into force, I have throughout believed that the federal scheme in its operation would have turned out as satisfactorily as.



broadly speaking, we can all of us regard the scheme of Provincial Autonomy as having turned out. I will not dilate on that subject today, for our work in connection with the federal scheme has been suspended. But in reaffirming as I do my belief in the essential soundness of the federal aspects of the Act of 1935, I do so with the greater emphasis because of the evidence which the federal provisions of the Act constitute of the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to achieve, with the minimum of delay, and on the basis which appears to represent the greatest amount of agreement between the various parties and interests affected, the unity of India, and to advance beyond a further and a most important milestone on the road to India's goal.

Such being the background against which we are working, what are the intentions and aims of His Majesty's Government in relation to India? I cannot do better in reply to that question than to refer to the statement made on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and with their full authority, by the late Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons on the 6th February 1935. That statement makes the position clear beyond a shadow of doubt. It refers to the pledge given in the Preamble of the Act of 1919, and it makes it clear that it was no part of the plan of His Majesty's Government to repeal that pledge. It confirms equally the interpretation placed in 1929 by Lord Irwin, as Viceroy, again on the authority of the Government of the day, on that Preamble, that "the natural issue of India's progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status". I need not dilate on the words of that statement. They are clear and positive. They are enshrined in the parliamentary record. They stand as a definite and categorical exposition of the policy of His Majesty's Government today, and of their intentions today in this end, the future constitutional development and position of India. I would add only that the Instrument of Instructions issued to me as Governor-General by His Majesty the King-Emperor in May 1937 lays upon me as Governor-General a direction so to exercise the trust which His Majesty has reposed in me "that the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within our Empire may be furthered to the end that India may attain its due place among our Dominions".

That is the policy and that is the position. Those are the intentions of His Majesty's Government. Let me go on to say another word about the Act of 1935. That Act was based on the greatest measure of common agreement which it was possible to obtain at the time when it was framed. It was based, as is well known to all of us, on the common labours of British and Indian statesmen, and of representatives of British India as well as of the Indian States over a long period of years. All parties were at one stage or other closely associated with those deliberations. And I can speak from personal experience when I bear tribute to the extreme anxiety of all those of us on whom, in the Joint Select Committee, there fell the more particular responsibility for devising proposals for the consideration of Parliament, to ensure that the fullest account had been taken of all interests, of the views of all political parties; and that nothing had been left undone to ensure that the outcome of our labours reflected the greatest measure of

agreement practicable in the conditions that confronted us.

Be that as it may, His Majesty's Government recognise that when the time comes to resume consideration of the plan for the future federal Government of India, and of the plan destined to give effect to the assurances given in Parliament by the late Secretary of State, to which I have just referred, it will be necessary to reconsider in the light of the then circumstances to what extent the details of the plan embodied in the Act of 1935 remain appropriate. And I am authorised now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties, and interests, in India, and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and cooperation in the framing of such modifications as may seem desirable.

I have, I trust, in what I have just said, made clear that the intention and the anxiety of His Majesty's Government is, as stated in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General, to further the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within the Empire to the end that India may attain her due place among the great Dominions. The Scheme of Government embodied in the Act of 1935 was designed as an essential stage in that process. But I have made clear in what I have just said that His Majesty's Government will, at the end of the war, be prepared to regard the scheme of the Act as open to modification in the light of Indian views. And I would make it clear, too, that it will be their object, as at all times in the past it has been, to spare no pains to further agreement by any means in their power in the hope of contributing to the ordered and harmonious progress of India towards her goal. Let me in that connection add that in the conversations I have had, representatives of the minorities have urged most strongly on me the necessity of a clear assurance that full weight would be given to their views and to their interests in any modifications that may be contemplated. On that I need say no more than that, over more than a decade, at the three Round Table Conferences, and at the Joint Select Committee, His Majesty's Government consulted with and had the assistance of the advice of representatives of all parties and all interests in this country. It is unthinkable that we should now proceed to plan afresh, or to modify in any respect, any important part of India's future Constitution without again taking counsel with those who have in the recent past been so closely associated in a like task with His Majesty's Government and with Parliament.

That some even more extensive scheme than I have mentioned, some even more widely phrased indication of the intentions of His Majesty's Government, is desired in certain quarters in this country, I am fully aware from the conversations I have had during these last few weeks. That that is a desire held with sincerity, and that those who hold it are convinced that it is in the manner in question that the future progress and development of India and the expressed intentions of His Majesty's Government can best be fulfilled, I fully and readily accept. I would utter one word only of caution. And if I say that the situation must be faced in terms of world politics and of political realities in this country, I

do so from no lack of sympathy, and no lack of appreciation of the motives that weigh with the people of India and the ideals that appeal to them. But I would urge that it is essential in matters of this nature, affecting the future of tens of millions of people, affecting the relations of the great communities, affecting the Princes of India, affecting the immense commercial and industrial enterprises, whether Indian or European, in this country, that the largest measure of agreement practicable should be achieved. With the best will in the world, progress must be conditioned by practical considerations. I am convinced myself, if I may say so, with the utmost emphasis, that, having regard to the extent of agreement which in fact exists in the constitutional field, and on this most difficult and important question of the nature of the arrangements to be made for expediting and facilitating the attainment by India of her full status, there is nothing to be gained by phrases which, widely and generally expressed, contemplate a state of things which is unlikely to stand at the present point of political development the test of practical application, or to result in that unified effort by all parties and all communities in India on the basis of which alone India can hope to go forward as one and to occupy the place to which her history and her destinies entitle her. I would ask that these words of caution be not taken as representing any lack of sympathy on the part of His Majesty's Government for the aspirations of India, or any indifference to the pace of her advance: and I would repeat that His Majesty's Government are but concerned to use their best endeavours, now as in the past, to bring about that measure of agreement and understanding between all parties and all interests in this country which is so essential a condition of progress to India's goal.

I turn now to the arrangements to be made to secure the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war. India's contribution has already been great, great to a degree which has impressed the imagination of the world. At the head of the list I would put the contribution which India has made in spiritual, and not in material, terms,—the support of her peoples for a cause which they can regard as a good and a righteous cause. In the material field equally her contribution is already most significant, and may be greater still. And in the circumstances the desire, the anxiety, of public opinion in India to be associated with the conduct of the war is naturally one with which I personally have throughout felt the greatest sympathy. In the circumstances I have described, the desirability of steps to ensure that leaders of public opinion should be in the closest touch with developments is of the first importance.

I have discussed with the utmost frankness with the leaders of the various parties who have been good enough to come to see me in connection with the constitutional position, by what machinery we could best give effect to this desire. We have examined a variety of expedients, and there has been no hesitation on the part of any of us in assessing the advantages and the disadvantages presented by each of them. I do not propose today to examine those various alternatives in particular detail. I will only say that in the light of my conversations and of the views (by no means always in accord) of

representatives of the great parties and of the Princes I am of opinion that the right solution would be the establishment of a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes, over which the Governor-General would himself preside, which would be summoned at his invitation, and which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war and with questions relating to war activities.

This group, for practical reasons, would inevitably be limited in size. But His Majesty's Government contemplate that it should be fully representative, and in particular that its personnel should be drawn by the Governor-General from panels prepared by the various major political parties, from which a selection of individuals to attend meetings of the group would be made by the Governor-General. I hope in the very near future to enter into consultation with political leaders and with the Princes on this question. I have no doubt whatever that an arrangement of this nature will most materially contribute to associating the Indian States and British India with the steps which are being taken for the prosecution of the war and with the arrangements that are being made in that connection: and I am confident, too, that in an association of this nature of representatives of all parties and all interests there lies the germ of that fuller and broader association of all points of view in this country which contains in it the seeds of such advantage for the future of India as a whole.

When I spoke to the Central Legislature a month ago, I made an appeal for unity. I would repeat that appeal today. It is my earnest hope that the explanations I have given will have contributed materially to the removal of misunderstandings. Even if on certain points I have not, to my knowledge, been able to give assurances so comprehensive as those which would I know have been welcomed in certain political quarters in India, I would urge insistently that this is not a moment at which to risk the splitting of the unity of India on the rock of particular phrases, and I would press that we should continue to aim at the unity of India even if differences of greater or less significance continue to exist. We live in difficult and anxious days. Great ideals are in issue. Dangers real and imminent face our civilization. Those dangers are as real and as imminent in the case of India as of any other member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Those ideals are as precious to India as to any country in the Empire or in the world. At this grave moment in the destinies of nations, my prayer to all parties would be not to dissociate themselves from the common effort, but to lend their cooperation and their assistance in the prosecution of the war. There could be no more decisive proof of India's fidelity to her best traditions than the full use of the opportunities afforded to her by the war for concerted endeavour. The ideals we have set before us, the objects to secure which we are engaged in the present struggle, are such as to command widespread sympathy and widespread support in India. They are in harmony with her past history and her highest traditions. It is my hope that in the grave juncture which we face India will go forward as a united country in support of a common cause.

85. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad

16 October 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Your letter of the 13th. I think that it will not be correct for you to say that Jinnah has banged the door by his reply to your suggestion for an appointment of an impartial judge. His reply was not helpful, but it applied to a particular subject. I find that Maulana is also of this opinion. I am going to Lucknow tonight and shall have a further talk with him. I suggest that you might await further communications from him before you take any action.

Some friends of ours who are not Congressmen (they are professors of the University here) made a suggestion yesterday which appeals to me. They said that it would be worthwhile for us to fix a particular day when meetings all over India might repeat and endorse the A.I.C.C. resolution on the crisis. I think this will be good from many points of view. Our position is somewhat peculiar. We have had our say and now we have to wait for a reply. Meanwhile the tension in the country remains and excitement increases. Unless we attract people's attention in a particular direction we shall become completely passive spectators of events. We must carry on some activity. In the U.P. we have been fairly active, chiefly in connection with the Tenancy Bill. To these we added on a reference to the present situation. We had yesterday a very large number of meetings all over the Province. In the district of Allahabad there were over 60 meetings. I attended four of them. I shall consult Maulana on this subject tomorrow in Lucknow and I am writing to Vallabhbhai also.

I have been receiving some news from England by letters and have also had long talks with Edward Thompson who has just come to India by air. I gather from all these that our statement and resolution have created some stir in political and journalistic circles in London. But much remains to be done to make the people at that end to realise the gravity of the situation. To some extent the very moderation of our language has led them to believe that we do not mean any action. Then of course there is the belief that Gandhiji having offered unconditional cooperation for the war, it is quite inconceivable that the Congress will ultimately come into conflict with the British Government. Gandhiji's name is used frequently in this connection. A phrase that has been used there was repeated to me. It was stated that the two major difficulties in the way of the Congress taking any aggressive step were the Muslim League and Gandhiji. All this sounds rather absurd here but that is the way people are talking in London.

The one thing that threatens the British Government more than anything else is the reaction of events in India on American opinion. On no account do they want American opinion to be alienated and they fear greatly any conflict in India

would lead to the stiffening of the American attitude towards the British Government.

I am sending copies of this letter to Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna.

86. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

11 Chaupaty Sea-Face  
Opp. Tilak Statue  
Bombay-7  
16 October 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of the 13th October. On the question referred to in your letter my opinion is that we should ignore Press reports. Sir Sikander could have written to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad whom he met at Delhi last time or to Gandhiji with whom he has easy access. In my opinion, no further initiative should be taken by us. The last answer of Mr. Jinnah in reply to your letter puts the whole burden on him for further initiative. I think we are spoiling our case by making persistent approaches, but in this matter Maulana Saheb's advice must be the last word. I have a strong conviction that there can be no settlement of the communal question till Mr. Jinnah feels that he cannot coerce the Congress.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Dighaghat  
Patna.

87. *From V.G. Laithwaite*

The Viceroy's House  
New Delhi  
16 October 1939

Dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

His Excellency asks me to acknowledge with very many thanks the copy of the Congress resolution passed at the meeting in Wardha on the 9th and 10th October, which you were good enough to send me in your letter of 11th October, and to thank for your courtesy in communicating it to him.

Yours sincerely,  
Laithwaite  
Private Secretary to Viceroy.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

88. *From Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh*

249-D, Bowbazar Street  
Calcutta  
17 October 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

After you left Sankarrao told me about the letter which he had handed over to you. He also told me that Kripalaniji and S.J. Jairamdas also had written to you more or less in the same strain. You know my views in the matter also. I do not want to express that in a letter which is going by post. Mahtab was in Calcutta on the 15th. He also shares the same feeling.

Just now I have heard summary of the Viceroy's declaration. U.P. asked me if I would issue a statement. The declaration is of course unsatisfactory. I have however refrained from making any statement. I do think no member of the Working Committee should issue any statement individually.

I think the Working Committee meeting should be called as early as possible.

As at present settled I am leaving Calcutta on the 20th night for a week or so. Please wire if I should not move out of Calcutta.

I hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,  
Prafulla Chandra Ghosh

P.S. I shall try to speak to you on the phone tomorrow morning.

Prafulla

89. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

6 Couper Road  
Lucknow  
17 October 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I had a talk today with Maulana Azad on the subject of your letter of October 13th. While we were talking, Sir Sikander Hyat telephoned to Maulana. Maulana is writing to you on this subject and suggesting what should be done. I agree with him and am writing, from my own viewpoint, what the result of our conversation was, so that you might have a clear picture.

I might also mention that two days ago I had a letter from Raghunandan Saran from Delhi. He informed me that Nawabzada Liaquat Ali had summoned him by telephone, soon after I had left Delhi, and wanted to know what additional steps were going to be taken in furtherance of my talk with Jinnah. He expressed his eagerness to have the Hindu-Muslim question settled and said that Jinnah having explained his fundamental position to me, the next step lay with us. Jinnah, the Nawabzada added, was in a friendly mood and wanted, as far as possible, to avoid controversies. He, Jinnah, was staying on in Delhi and it was hinted that he would be available there and something should be done before the Viceregal announcement.

Saran also wrote to me about his meeting Subhas in Delhi. Jinnah wanted to meet Subhas before the latter met the Viceroy, but this could not be arranged and Subhas saw him afterwards. Subhas reported afterwards that Jinnah distrusted entirely the Congress 'High Command'. To some extent, it was hinted, that I might be a suitable person to deal with him, provided I had full authority to do so. It was suggested that there would be little difficulty if Subhas was in charge of the matter.

I sent a brief reply to Saran pointing out, first of all, that when I was leaving Jinnah I had told him that I would gladly see him again if he wanted me to do so and sent me word. I told him how long I would remain in Delhi. No message however came to me from him. Our conversation had been of a general character and was complete in itself.

Further, I added that we have always been eager to discuss and settle our points of disagreement with the League. We are prepared to go far, but we can on no account give up our national and democratic basis or endanger the unity of India. Subject to that, we shall gladly discuss minority demands and grievances. We could not proceed on the lines of India being two nations etc.

I suggested to Saran that he might inform Nawabzada accordingly in his own language.

So much for Saran's letter and my reply.

Regarding your letter of the 13th, both Maulana and I feel that it will be undesirable for us to treat Jinnah's letter as banging the door to compromise.



This letter of Jinnah's was certainly a turning away from a friendly approach and it demonstrated how his mind continues to work in a way hostile to the Congress. Still it is not meant to end anything.

Now I come to Sikander Hyat's telephone message today. He said to Maulana that in the course of conversation between him (Sir Sikander) and Gandhiji last summer in Bombay the difficulty of the preamble had been got over and no longer presented an obstacle. This being so, Gandhiji might write to Sir Sikander or Rajendra Babu might write to Mr. Jinnah saying that the Congress and the Muslim League should appoint representatives to discuss the actual matters in dispute. Further that he (Sir Sikander) was prepared to go to Delhi during the next three or four days to settle details with Jinnah.

Maulana replied that he would consider the matter and get into touch with you. It was a short conversation.

Now it is not clear what Sir Sikander means by saying that the question of the preamble was satisfactorily solved last summer between him and Gandhiji and I fear that this has not been wholly disposed of. I do not want anything to be done under misapprehension. Apparently some phrase was used to the effect that the Muslim League was an important (aham) organisation. Of course the League is an important organisation and there can be no objection to saying so. But I doubt if that is what Mr. Jinnah meant. I think this should be cleared up and I have suggested to Maulana to write to Sir Sikander about it. Gandhiji might also be asked about that conversation of last summer.

At the same time, it is not desirable to delay matters when Sir Sikander wants an immediate answer. I think, therefore, and Maulana agrees with me, that you should write to Sir Sikander. You might refer to Sikander Hyat's public invitation for the Congress and League to come together as well as his telephone message to Maulana, and say that the Congress has always been ready to do so, but unfortunately some obstacles have come in the way. As Sir Sikander says that the difficulty of the preamble has been got over; if this is so, you will gladly advise the Congress Executive to take further steps in the matter. If necessary, representatives of the Congress and League can meet together. You might add that you do not yourself fully know or remember what the conversation was last summer between Sir Sikander and Gandhiji but in any event if the difficulty about the preamble no longer exists, as he suggests, then this need not come in the way and the real questions can be tackled straightaway. You should like, however, to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding which unfortunately has often occurred in the past and made progress difficult.

I think you might add, if I may say so, that you and your colleagues are anxious that at this moment of national and international crisis, we should all pull together for the good of India. You trust that the Muslim League will give its support to the demand put forward by the All India Congress Committee in regard to a clear declaration of war and peace aims by the British Government, and, in particular, recognition of India as an independent nation and the immediate implementing of this to the largest possible extent. Within the

framework of this demand, it is up to us to settle our problems *inter se* and we should make every effort to do so. In the last A.I.C.C. resolution reference has specially been made to the recognition and full protection of minority rights.

I do not know if I have expressed myself clearly. You will forgive me for suggesting to you what reply should be made to Sikander Hyat. I have put it down for your consideration and you will no doubt do what you consider proper. It is obvious that some reply must be sent soon and that reply cannot be anything in the nature of shutting the door. I think it is better that you write to Sir Sikander than to Mr. Jinnah at this stage as the suggestion has come from the former.

I am sending copies of this letter to Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

P.S. I have shown this letter to Maulana and he agrees with it. He now intends breaking journey at Patna tomorrow night to talk to me further on the subject.

Jawaharlal

Shri Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna.

90. *From Jairamdas Doulatram*

Wardha  
17 October 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Being one of your nominees on the Working Committee, I think it is fair to you that I should let you know how my mind is working and how far I can go with the Committee in regard to possible decisions arising out of the position taken up by the Congress on the war question. The Working Committee would have to meet soon to implement the resolution of the A.I.C.C. and in the light of the Government attitude, it would have to decide the course of action for Congressmen, whether by cooperation or otherwise. I feel that, in either case, the full implications of the course of action *in terms of our fundamental creed of non-violence* should be carefully considered. If the Working Committee's lead to the country conflicts with that basic creed, it would not be possible for me to be party to it and I would have to be relieved of the responsibility of the membership of the Committee. I hope neither you nor other colleagues on the Committee will misunderstand the spirit of this letter.

Yours sincerely,  
Jairamdas Doulatram

91. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

PERSONAL

Lucknow

October 17, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I arrived here this morning and had a long talk with Maulana Azad. Among other things he told me that the U.P. Taluqdars had written to you again about the proposed interview. Also that they had approached the Governor and the Viceroy on the subject, fixing the interview with the Governor sometime in November. Maulana told them a day or two ago that he did not appreciate this attempt on the part of the zamindars to ride two horses at the same time. They must choose between them.

It seems to me that if the zamindars are going to the Governor and the Viceroy, they can only do so in order to ask them to refuse their assent to the Tenancy Bill. If their interview with the Governor is fixed for sometime in November, this means at least a month's delay in the Bill becoming law. This delay will in any event be unfortunate but for us to be parties to it, even indirectly, will have an exceedingly bad effect. Day before yesterday we held a couple of thousand meetings in the U.P. asking for the Viceroy's assent to be given immediately. The peasantry are eagerly waiting for the Bill to be law and every delay has an irritating effect on them. These delays are being exploited by many zamindars to do something against their tenants which they will not be able to do as soon as the Bill becomes law. The tenants, knowing the provisions of the Bill, are surprised and irritated by these continual pinpricks and excitement grows.

Therefore it is essential that the Bill should receive the Viceroy's assent very soon and thus become law. All our efforts should be directed in this direction and we should do nothing which gives an excuse to others for delay. We should in fact object to zamindars' interviews with the Governor leading to this delay.

So far as our interview with the zamindars is concerned, it must be clearly understood what this is about and on no account must this be exploited for the purpose of delay. It is clear that we are not meeting the zamindars to discuss the Bill which has finally passed both Houses. It is not possible now to go behind that Bill and it must stand as it is at present. This Bill is a moderate measure, not going nearly far enough from the point of view of the peasants, and if a suspicion spreads that we are thinking of going back even on this, there will be trouble.

I suggest, therefore, that we should make it perfectly clear to the zamindars that we cannot go back on this Bill in any way whatsoever, nor can we discuss this with them. If they do not accept the Bill as it is, then there is no point in our having any interviews with them. They should, in fact, inform the Governor that they accept the Bill and that it should become law soon.

Then again there is another point. If the zamindars are going to the Governor

and the Viceroy, then there is no point in their interviewing us and they should be told so. We cannot be parties to a double game. It is necessary, therefore, for this situation to be put clearly to them. Maulana agrees with this and in fact told them so. But he could not say anything finally without reference to you. I hope you will also agree and will inform the zamindars accordingly.

I understand that the zamindars and taluqdars here have sent a message to the Secretary of State throwing their weight on the side of no-compromise between the Congress and the British Government.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Vallabhbai.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

Shri Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna.

92. *To Lord Linlithgow*

Camp: Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna  
October 18, 1939

Your Excellency,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 16th October enclosing an advance copy of your statement and thank you for the courtesy shown. As your Excellency has anticipated I am afraid it falls far short of our wishes and is not likely to satisfy the Congress. My regret is that a great opportunity has been missed. We shall be meeting in the Working Committee on the 22nd October at Wardha to give a considered reply.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

93. *From M.N. Roy*

Dehradun  
19 October 1939

Dear Sir,

During the last [few] days, a number of active Congress workers holding radical views assembled here on my invitation to discuss the present political situation.

with the object of making recommendations as regards Congress policy in the present juncture, for the consideration of yourself and the Working Committee. Workers from seven Provinces representing the views of numerous active Congressmen participated in our deliberations. We were also benefited by written reports from, and statements of opinion of, many others who could not be personally present. On the last day of our deliberations, the Viceroy made his declaration. This abruptly changed the situation very considerably. Naturally, we discussed the possible consequences of the Viceroy's declaration, and made a judgement of the policy which, in our opinion, the Congress should adopt in the changed situation. I have been advised to make the following recommendations in that respect.

The Working Committee will have to make a very fateful decision. Therefore, it is the duty of all Congressmen to assist it with carefully considered opinion and helpful recommendations. This letter is written in that spirit, and it is earnestly hoped that the views stated herein and recommendations made will receive from yourself and the Working Committee the consideration they deserve.

True to its ideals of freedom and democracy, the Congress always condemned the violence and the aggressiveness of the Fascist Powers. No freedom-loving Indian could ever approve of the British foreign policy during the last year which aided and abetted destruction of freedom of weak and small nations. When finally the British Government abandoned that policy of connivance with Fascism, and declared its determination to bring about the end of Hitlerism, the Congress naturally expressed its sympathy for the object, and offered its readiness to help the attainment of that laudable object of freeing Europe and the world from the greatest menace of our time. Although Gandhiji was for cooperation with the ostensibly noble cause unconditionally, the Congress Working Committee felt that India could play her part honourably and most effectively only as a free nation.

The Viceroy's declaration makes two points abundantly clear: 1. The war and peace aims of the British Government are not what they were given out to be in the beginning of the conflict, or they have been radically changed in the meantime; 2. The British Government has categorically refused to accept the condition on which in the opinion of the Congress India could offer cooperation honourably. So, the Viceroy's declaration has created a situation in which the Congress attitude must radically change.

In the opinion of the Congress, India was concerned with the conflict in Europe because it was precipitated with the ostensibly noble object of destroying the Fascist menace. Now, the war and peace aims of the British Government, as declared by the Viceroy, and previous to that stated by the British Prime Minister in Parliament, are such as will involve Europe in a large-scale and protracted war, which will be a great calamity in every respect. According to those authoritative declarations, the war and peace aims of the British Government seem to be to restore the unstable status quo created by the vindictive, ill-conceived and inequitable Treaty of Versailles. The creation of the

States of Eastern Europe was not motivated by the principle of the self-determination of nationalities, but by the strategic and imperialist considerations of the victorious Powers. Numerous national minorities were callously subjected to the domination of those states, none of which was an ethnological unit. The cause of the troubles and turmoils of post-war Europe can be traced to the Versailles Treaty. In course of time, the unstable and inequitous Versailles system broke down, throwing Europe in a state of chaos in which forces of violence and aggression ran amuck. Having itself, over a period of years, connived with the practical repudiation of the Versailles Treaty, the British Government today wants to plunge Europe into another orgy of death and destruction for restoring that broken-down status quo. India can never be a party to such an enterprise. Unfortunately, India is still a part of the British Empire, and as such she has been already involved in the war. But willing cooperation with the enterprise of the British Government is now altogether out of question for all self-respecting and liberty-loving Indians.

For another reason, India as represented by the Congress cannot approve of continuation of the armed hostilities in Europe. Although the British Government contributed little to the attainment of its object professed originally, Fascism as an international force, and German Nazism in particular, have suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of the Soviet Union. The Nazis have been compelled to abandon their long-cherished plan of expansion eastwards at the cost of the East-European peoples and finally of the Soviet Union. The Hitler-regime could command the support of a considerable section of the German people on account of diplomatic triumphs in the field of foreign policy and the glory of successful military feats. Thanks to the recent actions of the Soviet Union, it has been deprived of any credit on both the counts. The inevitable consequence will be serious weakening of the moral and emotional foundation of the Nazi regime which can be expected to be overthrown in course of time by the action of the German people, provided that it will not be reinforced by those very Powers which have been, by an accident, involved in a war with it. However, the plausible object of ending Hitlerism having been attained, to a large extent, the war in Europe has become completely useless, and cannot be of any concern for India.

In this situation, the immediate thing for the Congress to do is to throw its influence and the weight of its international prestige on the side of peace. In behalf of the Congress, as well as by Gandhiji personally, a fervent appeal should be forthwith made to the peoples of Europe, particularly of England and France, to demand an immediate termination of armed hostilities, and such a peaceful solution of the outstanding problems as would spare Europe the cataclysm of a large-scale war. The Nazi aggressiveness, which precipitated the present armed conflict, has been checked. The guarantee against any revival of the danger will be found in the recognition of the most salient fact of the present European situation, that the guarantee, if desired, can be offered only by the Soviet Union. The latter would willingly cooperate in any honest effort to keep

the Nazism [at] bay, under cheek, and to help the German people to set their house in order. The suggested action on the part of the Congress will be the most valuable contribution to the solution of the European crisis, and consequently will win for India the credit of giving the tormented world a courageous lead.

The appeal for an early termination of the war is sure to find a widespread response. Nevertheless, even in the "democratic" countries, democracy may not be able to assert its sovereignty. In that case, India shall have no other alternative than to leave Europe to its fate, and turn her attention exclusively to her immediate task of winning freedom. The Congress should take up an attitude of neutrality. As a part of the British Empire, India has been involved in the war. But that alone does not guarantee willing cooperation of the Indian people. Let the British Government carry on its war, if our counsel will not prevail. Let us apply ourselves to the task of preparing the ground for the decisive battle in our struggle for freedom which, thanks to the possible development of international situation, may be fought with the greatest chance of victory.

Now I permit myself the liberty of making some concrete suggestions regarding the execution of the policy outlined above.

Immediately, the Working Committee should resolve to issue the appeal for peace. Having issued it, there should be a country wide agitation in its support. The reasons for taking this step should be explained to the people from the Press and platform.

When the Congress will be obliged to fall back on the alternative policy, we shall have to proceed with great caution and circumspection. Non-cooperation does not necessarily mean active resistance. This cannot be undertaken forthwith with any great measure of success. All those who have the courage to face reality, and are not given to wishful thinking, must share Gandhiji's opinion that the country is not prepared for an effective resistance. That being the case, the wisest policy for the moment would be to avoid any premature clash. Any resistance, under the given conditions, would subject the country to an orgy of unrestricted repression: The Congress would be declared an illegal organisation; the framework of its organisation, built up laboriously over a period of years, will be destroyed by one blow; the leaders of the Congress together with thousands of active Congress workers will be imprisoned; the struggle for freedom will be practically suspended. That would certainly not be a desirable state of affairs. It would serve no purpose, because the suppression of Congress resistance would clear the field for the British Government to use India to the fullest extent with the willing cooperation of many Indians.

Any serious resistance must begin with the resignation of Congress Ministries in the Provinces. Otherwise, an extremely anomalous situation will be created in which Congressmen resisting India's forcible participation in the war will be persecuted by Congress Governments. But the resignation of Congress Ministries would create a very dangerous situation. Puppet ministries would be set up, and legislatures may be dissolved. There will be an orgy of unrestricted repression. Therefore, active resistance under the given conditions would do more harm than

good to the cause of our freedom.

The implication clearly is that, while declaring its neutrality towards the conflict in Europe, the Congress should not withdraw its representatives in office. But, on the other hand, the Congress Ministries in the given situation should be actuated with an entirely different motive. Instead of willingly shouldering the responsibility of preparing the country for the defence against some imaginary invasion, the primary task of the Congress Ministries should be to protect civil liberties, particularly the freedom of Press, platform and movement, against the ruthless operation of the Ordinances. If they do so determinedly, friction and conflict with the executive services would be inevitable. But those very factors could be eventually instrumental in quickening the popular spirit of resistance, thereby strengthening the Congress while weakening Imperialism. Ultimately, the Congress Ministries will have to resign, but by that time the psychological atmosphere and organisational conditions necessary for an effective resistance will have been created.

Meanwhile, the most important thing to do would be to activise and strengthen Congress organisations throughout the country. For that purpose, the prevailing orientation must change. It is a deplorable fact that one of the evil consequences of Congressmen accepting office has been the growth of reformist illusions even among the masses. What is still more deplorable is that this illusion has been promoted by the systematic propaganda of Congressmen connected with ministerialist and parliamentary activities, and of many others under their influence. The scramble for offices and jobs is corrupting the entire organisation. Jealousy and rivalry in that respect are renting the Congress organisations by the consequent intrigues and factional fights. Having been asked to depend entirely upon the Congress Ministries for their salvation, the masses have practically forgotten the ideal of Swaraj. The name is still mentioned, but what is really hankered after is some petty reform and benefits. If the country is not prepared for any effective resistance today, the cause of that deplorable situation is to be found in the wrong execution of the policy of office-acceptance. This must be corrected. The Congress Committees should be restored to their sovereign authority. Activities of the parliamentarians in their respective constituencies should be subordinated to, and guided by, the local Congress Committees. That will inspire the lower Congress organisations, directly in contact with the masses, with the sense of authority and responsibility. That sense will be an activising factor. If the country is to be prepared for striking the decisive blow in the struggle for freedom, in the most favourable moment, which may come before long, the task must be entrusted to the primary Congress organisations. Today, they have practically nothing more to do than to function as the agencies for ministerialist propaganda.

If the Congressmen in office are actuated rather with the spirit of resistance than of cooperation, if they understand that efficient administration of the Imperialist State is not compatible with the ideal of the Congress, then the Congress Ministries can be very helpful for the Congress to take up the attitude of



unconcern with the war, and apply itself to the task of preparing the country for the final struggle before long.

Yours sincerely,  
M.N. Roy

The President  
All India National Congress.

94. *From B. Shiva Rao*

7 Barakhamba Road  
New Delhi  
21 October 1939

Dear Rajenbabu,

I have been in telephonic connection with the Editor of the *Hindu* in Madras and conveyed through him to Rajaji certain proposals for a settlement of the present deadlock which may be acceptable to the Viceroy. Two or three days ago almost by accident I discovered in the course of a conversation with Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, the Commerce Member, that the idea of an immediate expansion of the Executive Council was not pursued under the impression that the Congress would refuse to look at any such scheme unless it gave the Congress a definite majority. That, it seems, was considered impracticable at present and was, therefore, dropped. Actually a scheme had been drawn up by two members of the Executive Council on the following lines: (1) The Executive Council to have three or four additional Members, at least two of whom would be Congressmen, and one representing the Muslim League; the fourth might be a Congressman or a representative of one of the States. (2) The Commander-in-Chief to be out of the Executive Council and the portfolio of Defence to be handed over to an Indian Councillor; with him would be associated a Standing Defence Committee to advise him on all aspects of Defence. (3) While the rules of procedure for business in the Executive Council will continue and all members would be bound by majority decisions, the new Members of the Executive Council would enjoy the same latitude in regard to voting on the floor of the Legislature, as was conceded to Ministers under Diarchy; that is to say, on vital matters on which they found themselves unable to accept the majority decision in the Executive Council, they would remain neutral at voting time in the Legislature.

Personally I had pressed for something more. I had suggested that even if the Congress Party should begin by being in a minority, steps should be taken progressively to convert the Executive Council in fact, if not in constitutional form, into a responsible Cabinet. For instance, there would be two vacancies in the Executive Council next summer, when Zafrulla and Jagdish Prasad are due

to retire. These two vacancies could be filled up in accordance with the position of the Congress in the country. If there had been no war, the inauguration of Federation would probably have taken place at the end of next year, and the Viceroy would have had a completely responsible Federal Cabinet (except for one or two Councillors). Therefore, there can be no objection to terminating the services of the present Members of the Executive Council at the end of 1940, so that thereafter the Executive Council will consist entirely of popular leaders. But that plan is not acceptable I am told. There can be no commitments in regard to the future, but a great deal will depend upon the success of the initial experiment. I was assured last night and again this morning that the Viceroy has an open mind on the other plan outlined above. I am also told that if the Congress Working Committee will look at it, there is a likelihood of its being accepted. I have been looking up the Act and have drawn up a note on what can be done even within the limitations of the present constitution. A copy is herewith enclosed.

I want to draw your attention to the possibility of a Member of the Executive being appointed Vice-President so that for all practical purposes he may have the same status as the Prime Minister in a Province; while business in the Executive Committee is now governed by certain rules of procedure, there is nothing to prevent a new rule being made that all business should pass through the hands of the Vice-President. In this way a certain amount of collective responsibility may be secured.

I believe there is a good deal of hesitation on the part of the Viceroy to go ahead with such a scheme because of his fear that a crisis may be brought on in a few days or weeks with threats of resignation. When I saw the Viceroy early in October at Simla he mentioned that difficulty to me. I replied that very much would depend upon the choice of his members, and a man like Rajaji would be an unqualified success from every point of view. I believe the Viceroy has again mentioned this point in the course of the last day or two and the similar answer was given to him.

Before leaving this subject I may say that I have had a long talk with Sir Maurice Gwyer and he said to me that the proposal is an attractive one and should receive serious consideration.

I have discussed the terms of the Viceroy's declaration with some of the highest officials here. There is, of course, a certain amount of soreness that even reasonable men like you should have used such strong language in rejecting the offer as worthless. It is explained that the Round Table Conference suggestion is after all a means to an end. If we can settle the minorities problem by ourselves, obviously there is no need for a R.T.C. The achievement of a position of equality with the other units of the British Commonwealth is not ruled out by the declaration. If the Congress and the Muslim League can put forward an agreed scheme, no government would be so foolish as to reject it. This, it is pointed out, is in essence self-determination. Democracy and freedom India can have to the extent that she wants. I am also told that if the Viceregal statement had specifically said that as soon as the Congress and the Muslim League came to

terms the British would accept their scheme, it would only have increased your difficulties. This is the official view. My answer was that if all these points are implicit in the declaration why cannot they be made explicit by a further interview with Gandhiji or any other leader of the Congress. I made the suggestion that an invitation should be sent to Gandhiji immediately, to reach him before the commencement of the Working Committee meeting, but for reasons which have not been divulged to me that suggestion was not acceptable.

I am on the telephone here, Delhi 7639. If there is anything you want, you can always get at me, especially in the mornings before 8 a.m., or after 8 p.m.

Please treat this letter as confidential, as for obvious reasons neither Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar nor Sir Maurice Gwyer would like to have their names mentioned even at meetings of the Working Committee.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,  
B. Shiva Rao

Enclosure not included.

95. *To Lord Linlithgow*

Camp: Wardha  
October 23, 1939

Your Excellency,

I beg to forward copy of resolution passed by the Working Committee. I regret that the Committee had to pass the resolution it did. After giving the fullest consideration to the announcement the Committee felt it could not do otherwise.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

His Excellency the Viceroy  
New Delhi.

*Enclosure:*

(Resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at its meeting held at Wardha on 22 October 1939)

The Working Committee are of opinion that the Viceregal statement in answer to the Committee's invitation for a clear declaration of Britain's war aims,

particularly in their application to India, is wholly unsatisfactory and calculated to rouse resentment among all those who are anxious to gain and are intent upon gaining India's independence. This invitation was made not only on behalf of the people of India, but for millions of people all over the world, who were weary of war and violence, and Fascist and Imperialist systems which exploited nations and peoples and were ultimately the causes of war, and who yearned for a new order of peace and freedom. The Viceregal statement is an unequivocal reiteration of the old Imperialistic policy. The Committee regard the mention of the differences among several parties as a screen to hide the true intention of Great Britain. What the Committee had asked for was a declaration of war aims as a test of Britain's bona fides regarding India irrespective of the attitude of opposing parties or groups. The Congress has always stood for the amplest guarantee of the rights of minorities. The freedom the Congress claimed was not for the Congress or any particular group or community, but for the nation and for all communities in India that go to build that nation. The only way to establish this freedom, and to ascertain the will of the nation as a whole, is through the democratic process which gives full opportunity to all. The Committee must, therefore, regard the Viceroy's statement as in every way unfortunate. In the circumstances the Committee cannot possibly give any support to Great Britain for it would amount to an endorsement of the Imperialist policy which the Congress has always sought to end. As a first step in this direction the Committee call upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations.

The Committee earnestly appeal to the nation to end all internal controversies in this hour of grave crisis and to act unitedly in the cause of India's freedom. They call upon all Congress Committees and Congressmen generally to be prepared for all developments and eventualities, and to show restraint of word and deed, so that nothing may be said or done which is not in keeping with India's honour or the principles for which the Congress stands. The Committee warn Congressmen against any hasty action in the shape of civil disobedience, political strikes and the like. The Committee will watch the situation and the activities of the British Government in India and will not hesitate to guide the country to take further steps whenever the necessity for this arises. The Committee desire to impress upon all Congressmen that a programme of resistance commensurate with the magnitude of the issue before the country requires perfect discipline within Congress ranks and the consolidation of Congress organisation.

The Working Committee realise that the non-violent resistance offered by the Congress in the past has sometimes been mixed with violence. The Committee desire to impress upon all Congressmen that any resistance that may have to be offered must be purged of all violence, and to remind them of the pledge taken to this effect as early as 1921 during the Congress session at Ahmedabad and repeated on many subsequent occasions.

96. *To all Provincial Congress Committees*

Bajajwadi

Wardha

October 26, 1939

Dear Sirs,

I enclose herewith for your information and attention the resolution of the Working Committee on the recent Viceregal pronouncement. You should have it translated in the language of your Province and distributed among the people in the form of leaflets. You may hold meetings to explain the implications of the resolution. But you should know that if meetings are prohibited you are expected to obey the prohibitory order. Indeed, till further instructions, there is to be no disobedience of orders or any other form of civil disobedience except with the special permission of the Working Committee's War Emergency Sub-Committee in exceptional cases.

Some of the implications of the resolution are noted hereunder:

- (1) The resolution divides itself into three parts:
  - (a) the preamble,
  - (b) the resignation of ministries, and
  - (c) the steps contemplated thereafter.
- (2) To understand the preamble, workers should read it together with the previous resolutions of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. of 14-9-39 and 9-10-39.
- (3) The workers are most concerned with the third part of the resolution. They will, therefore, set about purging the Congress organisation of its weaknesses—corruption and indiscipline.
- (4) Meetings, public or private, should avoid criticism of the British or those parties in the country that may be opposed to the Congress. They should confine themselves to principles and avoid personalities.
- (5) Since civil resistance is designed to replace violence, its first essential is that each resister has no violence in his heart. Mere non-violent action with the heart being violent is not of much consequence. Thus non-violent resistance becomes impossible until every worker has the conviction that non-violence in thought, word and deed is necessary for the attainment of our goal.
- (6) It should be remembered that non-violence is an all-pervading quality. Therefore if we are truly non-violent in respect of British rulers, we should be non-violent towards one another and towards our opponents. Our non-violence today is put to the greatest test in respect of Hindu-Muslim relations. Congressmen have to show their non-violence, in particular, at the time of Hindu-Muslim riots by losing their lives, if need be, to prevent them. They may not take sides.

- (7) Every Congressman has to take care of the constructive side of the programme. He or she has therefore to ply the charkha or keep himself or herself engaged in some khadi or village industry activity.
- (8) If he is a Hindu he has to give such assistance as he can in the campaign against untouchability.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

*97. From Macdonald Kongor*

Shillong  
26 October 1939

CONGRESS OFFICE  
WARDHA

ASSAM HILLMEN AND OTHER THINKERS OF SHILLONG ARE OF UNANIMOUS OPINION THAT PRESENT ASSAM MINISTRY SHOULD NOT RESIGN RESIGNATION WILL CAUSE A SETBACK TO CONGRESS PROGRESS HERE ABOUT PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES VARY COMMON PRESCRIPTION NOT SUITABLE UNLIKE OTHER PROVINCES ASSAM IS MUSEUM OF NATIONALITIES FOR WHICH PRESENT ARRANGEMENT IS PROVING MOST BENEFICIAL AND PROPOSED RESIGNATION WILL BE DISASTROUS ATTENTION OF HIGH COMMAND IS HEREBY DEMANDED ASSAM SHOULD ALSO BE CONSULTED AND NOT SIMPLY BE DICTATED UNDEMOCRATICALLY CONGRESS STRENGTH NOT YET SAFE HERE

MACDONALD KONGOR

*98. From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

11 Chaupaty Sea-Face  
Bombay-7  
27th October 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of the 25th October 1939. I have consulted Kripalani, Jawaharlal and Bhulabhai and they are agreeable to the change of date to 19th or 20th November whichever suits you.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter received from the Prime Minister of Assam and my reply to it.

Kripalani is going to Poona tomorrow. You will please communicate to him there the final date of the meeting by wire. His address will be C/o Bank of India, Poona.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai

*Enclosure:*

(Copy of letter from Gopinath Bardoloi to Vallabhbhai Patel dated Gauhati the 24th October 1939)

My dear Sardarji,

I am sure it is useless to think of the last resolution on War given us at Wardha on 12th October. It must have been amended in accordance with the Viceregal statement, and I expect that the amended resolution must be on its way to us. We will have our government meeting on the 30th October, and we expect to receive the draft before that date if it is necessary to pass a resolution before resignation. If we do not get one, we will draft one. Our sitting of the Assembly is fixed for the 30th November. It is absurd to think that we shall be waiting till then. On the other hand on account of Ramjan and Jagaddhatri Puja we cannot have any sitting before 22nd November, which is not much different from 30th November. You must therefore allow us to tender our resignation without the resolution passed in the Assembly. The Ministry consisting of 8 Ministers, with the exception of one, would be glad to resign on this issue—and even the 8th is not unwilling.

An alternative Ministry may not be impossible in our Province, although I am sure it would not be quite an easy affair. But whatever it is, Congress portion of the party, consisting of thirty-three in a party of fifty-seven members, would be broken-hearted if they are not allowed their due share in this rightful fight. Therefore, I hope there will be no condition in our resignation. I am writing all this to avoid delay of further correspondence.

I shall be obliged for an immediate reply. Our offices open on the 30th October.

Yours sincerely,  
Gopinath Bardoloi

99. To Gopinath Bardoloi

Bajajwadi, Wardha  
27 October 1939

HONOURABLE BARDOLOI  
SHILLONG

MACDONALD KONGOR FROM SHILLONG ASSAM HILLMEN OTHERS  
UNANIMOUSLY DESIRE CONTINUANCE CONGRESS MINISTRY OWING PECULIAR

CONDITIONS STOP DIFFERENT TREATMENT OF ASSAM UNDESIRABLE BUT  
PLEASE WIRE YOUR OPINION AND SITUATION FULLY ALSO GENERAL ATTITUDE  
CONGRESS AND OTHER GROUPS

RAJENDRA PRASAD

*100. From Lord Linlithgow*

The Viceroy's House  
New Delhi  
28 October 1939

Dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

I should much appreciate it if you could come to see me to discuss the present position on Wednesday, the 1st November, at 11 a.m. I have sent an invitation also to Mr. Gandhi and I am writing separately to Mr. Jinnah asking him to come at the same time and to bring with him, if he wishes, one of his leading supporters. I trust that the date and time which I suggest may be convenient for you. I take the opportunity to thank you for your kindness in sending me a copy of the latest Congress resolution.

Yours sincerely,  
Linlithgow

Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

*101. To B. Shiva Rao*

Camp: Wardha  
October 28, 1939

My dear Mr. Shiva Rao,

I thank you for your letter of the 21st October 1939. I showed it to Rajaji, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahatmaji. We have since then had Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in the House of Commons. It has not carried things further. On the whole there does not seem to be any intention of parting with the power at present to any extent and making definite promise of doing so at the end of the war.

There is thus no point of contact. The ministries are resigning. We have to await further developments.



*Dr. Rajendra Prasad:*

I am leaving for Patna on the 31st instant. If there be anything worth communicating you will kindly write me at Sadaquat Ashram, Patna.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

102. *From Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed*

Shillong  
28th October 1939

CONGRESS PRESIDENT  
WARDHA

YOUR TELEGRAM TO BARDOLOI WHO IS ABSENT DETAILED REPLY WILL BE SENT AFTER EXECUTIVE AND COALITION PARTY MEETING ON 31ST

FAKHRUDDIN

103. *From Gopinath Bardoloi*

Shillong  
30th October 1939

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD  
WARDHA

YOUR WIRE 27TH DISCUSSED AT PARTY EXECUTIVE SOLICIT YOUR OR OTHER PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENCE GAUHATI IMMEDIATELY FOR DECISION KINDLY WIRE

BARDOLOI

104. *To Gopinath Bardoloi*

30 October 1939

HONOURABLE BARDOLOI  
SHILLONG

MYSELF ACCOMPANYING GANDHIJI DELHI VALLABHBHAI LYING ILL BOMBAY MAULANA AZAD BUSY SHIA SUNNI DISPUTE LUCKNOW REGRET OUR VISIT IMPOSSIBLE DECIDE AFTER CONSULTING VALLABHBHAI

RAJENDRA PRASAD

105 From Dr. Gopichand Bhargava

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Lajpatrai Bhawan  
Lahore  
1 November 1939

My dear Babuji,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the resolution, the notice of which has been given by our Assembly Party. It will be discussed in the Assembly on Friday the 3rd November 1939.

Yours sincerely,  
Gopichand

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
President, Indian National Congress  
Camp: Delhi.

*Enclosure:*

(Copy of Notice of a motion given by the Punjab Assembly Congress Party)

This Assembly views with grave concern that the British Government have made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India and that in complete disregard of Indian opinion laws have been passed and measures adopted curtailing the powers and activities of Provincial Governments.

This Assembly being definitely of the opinion that the declarations, authorised by the British Government, in answer to the demand of an unambiguous statement of its war and peace aims in reference to India and through them to the British Government that in consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential, in order to secure the cooperation of the people of India, that the principles of democracy and self-determination should be applied to India, and her policy be guided by her own people and that India be regarded as an independent nation entitled to frame her own Constitution safeguarding, *inter alia*, in the fullest degree, the rights and interests of all minorities, and further that suitable action be taken, in so far as possible in the immediate present, to give effect to those principles in regard to the present governance of India.

This Assembly disapproves of the attitude and policy of the Punjab Government in offering unqualified cooperation to the British Government in the face of the denial of our rights by the British Government and in utter disregard of public opinion in the country, thereby lowering the honour of the Province.

106. *From S. Amir Hasan Meerza*

C/o Mission College  
Amritsar  
Ranjitpura  
2nd November 1939

Dear President.

I wish to draw your kind attention on a very important matter that is for the present the Sikh leader (Akali) must be taken in your confidence, otherwise all attempt with regard to the barbarous European War execution will be nothing, but, like a dead flower with beauty and fragrance fled.

It was wrong of the Indian National Congress Committee to call leaders to consider the European War problem and left the Sikhs out, about which felt insulted and they protest against it in their all-Akali meeting on 1st ult. 1939.

According to my experiences I am bold to state that he who has the Sikhs and will bring the Sikhs and the Muslims together, he will be the greater politician of India or might rule India.

As a military man I know the mentality of the Sikhs, so, I felt it will be wrong on my part not to inform you about this tragedy.

With all best possible kindest regard, be God speed.

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.

I remain,  
Your sincere co-worker,  
S.A.H. Meerza

N.B. Please remember me to Maulana Azad Saheb (as Meerza German Wala). Last year soon after my return from U.S.A. (expelled by the efforts of the British authorities in America) I offered my humble self all in all and my 25 years' European (21 years of German) experiences (military, scientific and commercial) at the disposal of the Indian National Congress Committee, but, it is most remarkable that until now acknowledgement [has] not been sent to me, for which I am feeling pain in my heart. I am working hard for the common cause of ours alone.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
President  
Indian National Congress  
Birla House, New Delhi

107. From Lord Linlithgow

The Viceroy's House  
New Delhi  
2 November 1939

Dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

You will remember that I agreed during our conversation yesterday to let you have in concrete form the proposition which I put to you and the other gentlemen who were present at the meeting, emphasising that I did so with a genuine desire to help, a desire fully shared by H.M.G.

2. The proposition which I invited you and the other gentlemen present to consider, as leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League, was that, given the great importance of ensuring harmonious working at the Centre, you should enter upon discussions between yourselves with a view to discovering whether you could reach a basis of agreement between yourselves in the Provincial field, consequent on which you could let me have proposals which would result in representatives of your two organizations immediately participating in the Central Government as members of my Executive Council. I brought out, too, that in my judgment it ought not to be necessary absolutely to resolve every detail of such differences as may exist in the Provinces. What was required, as was remarked in the course of the discussion, was a degree of agreement in respect of the Provinces such as to make it possible for my visitors, and the organisations which they represented, to put forward a scheme which could be considered for the Centre.

3. I added in regard to any arrangement at the Centre: First that one would hope that it might be found practicable to include also one or possibly more representatives of other important groups, and that that was a question on which I should value your advice when we come to grapple with the details;

Secondly that the arrangement which I invited you to consider for the Centre would be an *ad hoc* arrangement for the period of the war and quite distinct from the much wider question of constitutional reform at the end of the war; and I mentioned that on that last point my declaration had set out the position of H.M.G. I attach a copy of the extracts from that declaration which I brought to the notice of the meeting yesterday;

Thirdly that the position of anyone appointed to my Executive Council as a member of a political party would be identical, in privileges and in obligations, with that of the existing Members of my Council; and

Fourthly that the arrangement would be within the general scheme of the existing law. It would be admittedly and inevitably a makeshift arrangement for the duration of the campaign. I brought out that what was required now, if we could get a workable scheme together, was to put it into operation with as little delay as possible pending the more general review of the whole constitutional position which H.M.G. have expressed their readiness to undertake after the conclusion of hostilities.

4. I think the above makes the position clear. Let me in conclusion repeat that, as I said yesterday, I am at any time at your disposal or that of the other gentlemen who attended our meeting, whether jointly or singly, to give any assistance in my power in reaching conclusions on these most important matters. I feel certain, as I said yesterday, that the suggestions I have put to you, reflecting as they do very real and substantial evidence of the anxiety of H.M.G. to reach a complete understanding, will receive full and sympathetic consideration from you.

5. I am sending a similar letter to Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah.

Yours sincerely,  
Linlithgow

Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

*Enclosure:*

(Extracts from the declaration made by Viceroy)

"His Majesty's Government recognise that when the time comes to resume consideration of the plan for the future federal Government of India, and of the plan destined to give effect to the assurances given in Parliament by the late Secretary of State, it will be necessary to reconsider in the light of the then circumstances to what extent the details of the plan embodied in the Act of 1935 remain appropriate. And I am authorised now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties, and interests, in India, and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and cooperation in the framing of such modifications as may seem desirable." I added, "I have I trust, in what I have just said, made clear that the intention and the anxiety of His Majesty's Government is, as stated in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General, to further the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within the Empire to the end that India may attain her due place among the great Dominions. The scheme of Government embodied in the Act of 1935 was designed as an essential stage in that process. But I have made clear in what I have just said that His Majesty's Government will, at the end of the war, be prepared to regard the scheme of the Act as open to modification in the light of Indian views. And I would make it clear, too, that it will be their object, as at all times in the past it has been, to spare no pains to further agreement by any means in their power in the hope of contributing to the ordered and harmonious progress of India towards her goal." I remarked finally, speaking of the demands of the minorities for an assurance, that full weight would be given to their views and interests. It is unthinkable that we should now proceed to plan afresh, or to modify in any respect, any important part of India's future Constitution without

again taking counsel with those who have in the recent past been so closely associated in a like task with His Majesty's Government and with Parliament.

108. *To Lord Linlithgow*

New Delhi  
3 November 1939

I thank you for your letter of November 2nd embodying in concrete form the proposition which you had placed before us when we saw you on November 1st. My colleagues and I have given our earnest consideration to it. We have had also the advantage of full talks with Mr. M. A. Jinnah. But we find ourselves unable to vary the answer we gave you during the interview.

At the outset I would like to say that both Gandhiji and I missed at the interview any reference to the main and moral issue raised by the Congress about clarification of war aims without which it was impossible for the Congress to consider any subsidiary proposal.

The present crisis has arisen owing to the outbreak of the war in Europe and the action of the British Government in declaring India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people. This crisis is entirely political and is not related to the communal issue in India. It raises vital questions in regard to the war aims of the British Government and the position of India in relation to them. The Congress Working Committee, as you are aware, issued a lengthy statement on September 14th, 1939,\* in which they invited the British Government to declare these war aims and, in particular, how these aims were going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. It was further stated that the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own Constitution through a Constituent Assembly, without external interference, and should guide their own policy. On the 10th of October 1939 the All India Congress Committee approved of and endorsed this statement, and stated that in the declaration to be made by the British Government, India must be declared an independent nation and present application should be given to this status to the largest possible extent. The Committee further added that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities.

Subsequent to this, the policy of the British Government was declared in the Viceregal statement, extracts from which you have been good enough to send me. This statement was considered by the Congress Working Committee soon after and the Committee expressed their opinion that it was unfortunate and wholly unsatisfactory. As a consequence of this, they felt compelled to declare that they

were unable to give any support to Great Britain and to call upon the Provincial Governments, in Provinces where the Congress is in a majority, to tender their resignations. In these Provinces the Provincial Assemblies have passed and are about to pass resolutions repeating the Congress demand.

It is worthy of note that the Viceregal declaration of British policy met with disapproval of the overwhelming body of opinion in India, even outside the Congress.

Subsequent statements made on behalf of the British Government in Parliament have not made any essential difference to the policy outlined in the Viceregal statement, and, as you have rightly pointed out, that policy is still governed by the extracts from it that you have kindly sent us. I am afraid it is quite impossible for us to accept this policy or to consider any steps to further cooperation unless the policy of the British Government is made clear in a declaration on the lines suggested by the Congress.

It has pained us to find the communal question being dragged in this connection. It has clouded the main issue. It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Congress that it is our earnest desire to settle all points of communal controversy by agreement and we propose to continue our efforts to this end. But I would point out that this question does not in any respect come in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom as suggested above. Such a declaration applies to the whole of India and not to any particular community, and the Constituent Assembly, which will frame India's Constitution, will be formed on the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation. We are all agreed that there must be full protection of minority rights and interests and this protection should be by agreement between the parties concerned. The British Government taking or sharing the burden has, in our opinion, made a settlement of the question much more difficult than it should have been. It should allay all real anxiety on the part of the British Government when the Congress declares that it contemplates no Constitution which does not carry with it the protection of real minorities to their satisfaction.

It seems to us that a clear declaration of the kind suggested is an essential preliminary to any further consideration of the matter. I should like to add that recent developments in the European war have made it all the more necessary for a clear enunciation of war aims. If a satisfactory declaration is made a discussion of the proposal made by Your Excellency will be appropriate and useful and we shall gladly discuss it with you. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that Gandhiji is in full agreement with this letter. We propose to leave tomorrow evening for Wardha unless Your Excellency desires otherwise.

Rajendra Prasad

109. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna  
3 November 1939

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I have received your letter and thank you for the same. I have been having meetings of the Labour Enquiry Committee and the University Sub-Committee of the Education Reorganisation Committee, with both of which I am connected. What with the heavy work and what with my own weak health, I am unable to issue a statement regarding lascars. I have [collected] cuttings etc. from newspapers containing the news and in a day or two I shall issue a statement as required after studying [it].

I have noted the letters you wrote to Mr. Fazlul Huq and Mr. Jinnah.

I have received a long letter from Mr. Carl Heath which has been addressed to Mahatmaji, yourself and me. I will write to him at length and will send you a copy of my reply. There is one thing in that letter which requires some action on our part. Mr. Carl Heath says that [in] the White Paper issued in England there is a section mentioning the complaints of oppression on Musalmans by Congress Governments. He does not say whether the White Paper contains also the replies of the Provincial Governments published from time to time regarding these replies and publish them in a pamphlet. That will contain summaries of the complaints. But, I believe, it does not contain these replies. I am suggesting to Kripalaniji to get a good sum[mary] made of the Provincial replies and publish them in a pamphlet. That will contain summaries of the Provincial replies consolidated in one place. You will recollect that some time ago this was suggested by Mr. Asaf Ali, I believe, to the Working Committee, but for some reason or other, we did not, at the time, think [it] necessary. It seems to me that we must publish it now. If you approve, kindly ask Kripalaniji to expedite the matter.

\* \* \*

Since last night I have had [a] little temperature, along with my cough, which, of course, continues, but there is no anxiety.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

\*\*\*Portion of the letter moth-eaten.



110. *From Jogesh Chandra, Abdul Ghani and others*

Shamshernagar  
4th November 1939

DR RAJENDRAPRASAD  
PRESIDENT CONGRESS  
DELHI

ASSAM NATIONALIST HINDOOS MUSSALMANS STRONGLY DEPLORE ATTITUDE OF ASSAM MINISTRY NOT OBEYING ORDER OF HIGH COMMAND PLEA OF PECULIAR CONDITION PUT FORTH IS SIMPLY RETAINING THEIR OFFICES GENERAL PUBLIC DO NOT SUPPORT

JOGESH CHANDRA ABDŪL GHANI OTHERS

111. *From Dr. Debesh Mukherji*

3/1 Kalī Bannerji Lane  
Howrah  
5 November 1939

Dear Babu Rajendra Prasad,

You saw me at Wardha being introduced by Panditji. I am Dr. Debesh Mukherji, of Indian National Congress China Medical Unit. Madame Sun Yat-Sen wrote me a letter which is in reality an appeal to the Indian people. I am sending a copy of it to you. I have sent copies of Madame's letter to Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Poet Tagore and Babu Subhas Ch. Bose. Babu Subhas Ch. Bose has already issued an appeal to the Indian people; a copy of that is also sent to you. I have requested everybody to issue individual appeals for the cause on behalf of which Madame appeals. May I hope you as the President of Indian National Congress will join hands with others and appeal for the cause.

Will you kindly send me a copy of the appeal if you do so. I hope to leave for China by the end of this month.

Yours sincerely,  
Debesh Mukherji  
Member, Indian National Congress China  
Medical Unit

Enclosure 1:

(Copy of letter from Madame Sun Yat-Sen)

THE CHINA DEFENCE LEAGUE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

21 Seymour Road  
Hong Kong

Dear Dr. Mukherjee,

We have not heard from you since the outburst of war in Europe, and we are anxious to know what effect this is likely to have upon your work for China, which has helped us so much in past months.

The China Defence League was formed more than a year ago as an active organization to help the Chinese people in their struggle against Japanese aggression, and through its special knowledge of the conditions of China's war of resistance, it has been able to give valuable assistance to China's fighters and war victims at points where that aid was most sorely needed. In this work of medical and civilian relief, we have been entirely dependent upon our contributions from such friends of China as yourselves.

Now that the tide of fascist aggression has spread to Europe, our Committee would like to reaffirm their solidarity with the worldwide struggle for national independence, democratic freedom and world peace. For more than two years the Chinese people have been the vanguard in that struggle. The whole world knows the story of their sufferings, the whole world knows their determination never to submit or yield.

The Far Eastern front remains a key area in the struggle against fascist aggression, and may yet prove to be the decisive one. The Chinese people will not lay down their arms until the last Japanese invader has been driven back across the yellow sea. A free China would be the first and greatest step towards peace and freedom throughout the world.

The recent developments have been such that it seems likely that China in the near future may have to bear the brunt of a new and more ruthless Japanese offensive. And there is a real danger that some of our friends abroad, in the stress and excitement of these perilous days, may lose sight of China's greatest need. That is why we appeal to you earnestly now *not to relax your past efforts in China's behalf, but to continue and even to extend them.*

May we remind you of the handicaps under which the Chinese armies are fighting today? They have as yet only the beginnings of an adequate medical service, they are ravaged by disease that is often a deadlier enemy than Japanese bombs. Many of the soldiers at the front even suffer from malnutrition. These are urgent problems such as confront no other forces fighting in the same cause.

In any European war, it is the [army] which is given the first consideration, and the troops at the front are often better provided than the civilian population.

Essential services such as food, medical attention, supplies and equipment are provided through a modern Army Medical Corps. Conditions in China, as you know, are very different.

When Japan launched her invasion in 1937, the Chinese Army Medical Corps was feudal in its organization, methods and equipment. What improvements have been made have been largely due to the support of friendly bodies such as yours. Yet even at this moment only 15% of the doctors and nurses working with the Chinese armies are fully qualified. Surely it is here in China where the bare essentials for saving life (and not just comforts for the troops) are so urgently needed, that your own contribution can be most effective.

*What does China need?* Drugs—in immense quantities—for the fighting of malaria, cholera, typhoid, dysentery and relapsing fever. Hospital equipment of every kind to improve the medical services—dressing, bandages and first-aid supplies. Blankets for the protection of the wounded during the coming winter. Tinned milk and concentrated foodstuffs for the sick and wounded, for China's orphans of her two years of war. Funds—all the more valuable now, since the favourable exchange with the Chinese dollar—for the extension and support of all these services.

The China Defence League will continue to receive and acknowledge all such contributions and supplies, and to forward them where the need is greatest; or wherever the donors may wish them to be used.

So we appeal to you now

To carry on the work for China that you have so splendidly begun.

To recognise that China's struggle is the same struggle as your own; but that China's need is greater.

To remember that China has already suffered the devastation of over two years of war.

To remember that we ask your help for the saving of life, not the taking of it.

Yours in the cause of democratic  
freedom and world peace,  
Soong Ching Ling  
(Madame Sun Yat-Sen)  
Chairman

for the Central Committee of China Defence League

*Enclosure 2:*

(Subhas Chandra Bose's appeal to the Indian people)

#### AN APPEAL

The public must have seen in the Press the letter written by Madame Sun Yat-Sen to Dr. Debesh Mukherji who had been to China as a member of our medical

mission to that country. This letter is really an appeal to the Indian people. The Chinese people have deeply appreciated the small services that we have been able to render them in one of the darkest hours in their history. The letter written to Dr. Mukherji is in reality an appeal to India, and will, I am sure, move every heart. I would therefore appeal to my countrymen to contribute liberally in cash or in kind towards the medical relief that our doctors in China have undertaken. Contributions may be sent either to Dr. Debesh Mukherji, 3/1 Kali Bannerji Lane, Howrah, or to Dr. Sunil Bose, 38/2 Elgin Road, Calcutta, or to S. G. P. Hutheesing, National Planning Committee, Old Customs House, Bombay.

Subhas Ch. Bose

112. *From Ram Prasad Jaiswal*

ALL INDIA DEPRESSED CLASSES LEAGUE

Head Office  
581 Colonelganj  
Allahabad  
7th November 1939

Dear Sir,

The humble undersigned is herewith forwarding the decision of the All India Nationalist Depressed Classes League Working Committee which took place at 5-A, Fort Road, on the 21st and 22nd October 1939 at Allahabad. Kindly acknowledge the same.

I am always at your service.

Yours sincerely,  
Ram Prasad Jaiswal  
Secretary

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
President, All India National Congress  
Sadaquat Ashram, Patna.

*Enclosure:*

(Proceedings of a meeting of the Executive Committee of the All India Depressed Classes League held at Allahabad on 21 and 22 October 1939)

A meeting of the Executive Committee of All India Depressed Classes League was held at 5-A, Fort Road, Allahabad, on 21st and 22nd October 1939. Babu

Jagjivan Ram, B.Sc., M.L.A. (Parliamentary Secretary of the Bihar Ministry), Vice-President of the League, was in the chair. The following members were present:

1. Babu Jagjivan Ram, B.Sc., M.L.A.
2. Babu R.L. Biswas, M.L., M.L.A.
3. Babu Ram Prasad, M.L.A.
4. Babu Chetram, M.L.A.
5. Babu Biswanath Prasad, M.L.A.
6. Babu Prithwi Singh Azad
7. Babu Jamunaram
8. Babu Ramprasad Jaiswal

After prolonged discussion the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

### *Resolutions*

1. This meeting [resolves] that the following members be co-opted to the Executive Committee of the A.I.D.C. League:

1. Babu Ram Prasad, M.L.A. (Bihar)
2. Babu Chetram, M.L.A. (U.P.)
3. Babu Biswanath Prasad, M.L.A. (U.P.)
4. Babu Premhari Burma, B.L., M.L.A. (Bengal)

2. That a working council of the League be formed of the following members to conduct the business of the League in urgent matters:

1. Babu Karan Singh Kane (President)
2. Babu Jagjivan Ram (Vice-President)
3. Babu R.L. Biswas (Secretary)
4. Babu Prithwi Singh Azad
5. Babu H.J. Khandekar, M.L.A.
6. Hon. V.I. Muniswami Pillay
7. Babu Chetram, M.L.A.
8. Babu Biswanath Prasad, M.L.A.

3. This meeting while considering the serious situation created by the war in Europe and the declaration of the Viceroy regarding war aims with reference to India, is led to believe that the British Government do not like to willingly give any political concession to the Indians just like the Brahminical oligarchy behave with the scheduled castes and further that the British Government do not like even to take the Indians as partners of the British Commonwealth, not to talk of the introduction of complete democracy in this country. In the opinion of the Committee the declaration of the Viceroy in spite of Mahatma Gandhi's friendly

and responsive attitude, is vague, inopportune and an open challenge to the Indian nation.

It thinks that the idea of a Round Table Conference at the end of the war to make such modifications as desirable in the Constitution, after exciting communal passion of the various minorities is simply to perpetuate the British game of divide and rule and the formation of a nominated consultative body only for war measures is meaningless.

This committee while endorsing the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed at Wardha in the 2nd week of this month, feels that there is still time left for the British Government to avail of the friendly offer of Mahatma Gandhi and secure active cooperation which in the present circumstances has become impossible for any honourable party or community of this country.

4. In the considered opinion of the executive committee of the All India Depressed Classes League, the recent utterances and statements by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on the constitutional changes in the country as also on the Viceregal declarations do not represent the views of the scheduled castes inasmuch as they have not been made after consulting scheduled caste leaders having some following either in the country or in their respective Provinces. Those who had any say in this matter or those who were advised or consulted by the learned Doctor—like Mr. Shivraj, Diwan Bahadur Srinivasa and others—neither command the confidence nor represent the feelings of the scheduled castes of the country.

This committee further considers that the views expressed by Dr. Ambedkar and others—specially the idea of repudiating the Poona Pact and of entrusting the rights and interests of the scheduled castes in the hands of reactionaries—are harmful to the progress of the country and detrimental to the cause of the scheduled castes themselves.

This committee, therefore, declares that any understanding arrived at with Dr. Ambedkar or any other scheduled caste leader not having the sanction of the scheduled caste masses of the country behind him, by anybody, will not be binding on the scheduled castes of the country.

5. (a) The executive committee of the A.I.D.C. League believes that the Indian National Congress is the one single political organisation in this country which can claim to be representing the various communities and interests of the country and in the hands of which the rights and interests of all minorities are preserved and safeguarded; and as such this is the only body which can be entrusted to speak on behalf of the entire nation on any question relating to the emancipation of the country.

In any fight for the liberation of the motherland and specially in the present crucial situation, the League will be always ready to follow the lead of the Congress, consistent with the rights and interests of the scheduled castes.

(b) The League, while not doubting in the least the Congress attitude vis-à-vis the scheduled castes and while quite conscious of the fact that with the Congress taking up the cause of the scheduled castes in right earnest, the emancipation of

the latter will be accelerated, wishes to draw the attention of the Congress High Command and through them the Congress to the fact:

1. That the Congress ministries in various Provinces have not so far given proper and adequate consideration to the question of social, educational and economic betterment of the scheduled castes and of their proper representation on local bodies and public services.
2. That the Provincial Congress Committees while selecting candidates for election to local bodies have ignored the claims of the scheduled castes for all practical purposes.
3. That at the time of election to the various elective committees in the Congress itself, while great stress is laid on electing the Muslims to these bodies in adequate numbers by statements and circulars issued by Congress leaders and offices, the poor and weak scheduled castes are simply ignored with the result that though scheduled castes enrol themselves as Congress members in large numbers, their representation on such committees is practically nil.

The League further views with great regret the way in which scheduled castes—especially those who are nationalist and who will swim [or] sink [with] the Congress—have been ignored by the Congress High Command who did not think it worth their while to invite any of their representatives with a view to know whether the scheduled castes have got to say anything in the present critical situation of the country, though a number of nationalist Muslims and Muslim organisations were so invited in spite of their being properly represented on the Working Committee of the Congress.

This Committee, therefore, requests the Congress to take the nationalist scheduled castes and their organisations in full confidence on all matters affecting the scheduled castes as is done in the case of the nationalist Muslims and their organisations.

S.L. Biswas  
Ram Prasad Jaiswal

113. *From P.M. Dhar*

Ernakulam  
(Cochin State)  
7 November 1939

Sir,

Enclosed please find copies of two statements, the contents of which are agitating the people of Cochin State. Cochin is a small native State in the Madras

Presidency on the Malabar Coast. It has made a show of conferring partial responsible government on the people and with that object has given over to the Leader of the Majority Party in the State Legislative Council, the Department of Rural Development. The Department is now controlled by a popular minister. But due to the lack of a stable majority, that is, the lack of a well-organised political party in the State and because the Indian National Congress has discountenanced parliamentary activity in the State in its name, the Ministry is dependent on Government support for its existence. And because of this perhaps, the Minister has joined the War Purpose Committee of the Cochin Government and is generally cooperating with the war measures of the Government. The two political parties in the State, the "Cochin Congress" and the "Cochin State Congress", are so supine and after the fishes and loaves of offices [that] they have not yet considered or given a lead to the State on the war situation. It was under such circumstances that I issued the statement calling upon the Minister to resign. Having a gagged Press and blessed with a pernicious Press Law, the State papers suppressed the statement. But the Madras papers featured it. And now one of the Cochin papers has, while criticising the proposal of the resignation of the Minister, whole-heartedly endorsed Mr. Subramanyan's suggestion.

I would like you to clarify the following points for us. Can the members and office-bearers of the Indian National Congress agitate for our Minister's resignation? What is the attitude of the Congress to an advanced State like Cochin having at least a shadow of popular government? Does the Indian National Congress demand our Minister's resignation if he is a member of Indian National Congress? Does not the Indian National Congress expect the political parties in the State to rally round its banner at this fateful hour in India's national history? Are not the members of the Indian National Congress in the State also expected to carry out the decisions of the Congress on all matters?

Thanking you,

I remain,  
Yours in service,  
P.M. Dhar  
Member

Cochin District Congress Working Committee

The President  
Indian National Congress  
Camp: Patna.

Enclosures not included.



114. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan

Allahabad

November 11, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I was sorry to learn from the Press that you have been unwell again. I hope you have recovered. I do not quite know whether you are going to Wardha or not.

Friends in Allahabad are very keen on having a public meeting at which they could hear you and Vallabhbhai. I have told them that it is not easy for us to fix engagements during the Working Committee meetings. Possibly after the Working Committee is over we might have a public meeting. It would be a good thing to have such a meeting here when you come. Our Working Committee begins on the 19th, Sunday. It is bound to continue till the 21st. On the 20th Bapu will be silent and though we shall no doubt meet, our work will be of a somewhat desultory character. Do you think it is possible to have a public meeting on the 20th, Monday evening, at 5 p.m. or thereabouts? I shall be grateful to you if you send me a telegram.

I have been receiving letters and cables from London which are disturbing. It appears, various phrases and sentences distracted from their context are cabled there and produce an entirely wrong impression. The result is complete confusion at the other end and a belief that Congress is not serious and does not mean business and is only out to bargain here and there. The British attitude is to play up to this and talk on and on without doing anything, thus allowing the issue almost to be talked out. What seems to me essential is a very clear enunciation of our position which would make it impossible for anyone in England or here to misunderstand it. It is unfair even to the opponent and certainly to our own people to leave them in doubt as to where we stand and whether we are in earnest or not.

Certain remarks of Bapu's in a recent statement seemed to me unfortunate. He said that we cannot have civil disobedience so long as the Viceroy is carrying on the talks and so long as we have not come to an agreement on the Hindu-Muslim question. There is no doubt great force in his argument and we should not precipitate civil disobedience so as to bring about a Hindu-Muslim conflict or at a time when it appears that efforts are being made on the part of the Viceroy to come to an agreement. But a positive statement of a kind made by Bapu really makes settlements and agreements far more difficult because it leads the other parties to feel that they have the key in their hands. There is no doubt that at the present moment there is a complete impasse between the British Government and us. There has been a final and absolute refusal by Zetland and others to meet our demands. He has said that it is impossible for the British Government to agree to what we want. Bapu's statement after all this must lead people to think that we are not serious in our demand and in any event the Viceroy can play with us for as long as he likes to.

Jinnah has been placed politically and even communally in a difficult position and he does not quite know what to do. Communally he has nothing to talk to us about except on the basis of Provincial and Central Governments. This we cannot do till a satisfactory declaration is made by the British Government. His not joining us in this declaration weakens him and the League and there are many people in the League who are thoroughly dissatisfied with him. If however we say to him that we are going to do nothing in the nature of aggressive action till he agrees to it, he knows that he is in a dominant position and can play the tune.

I am enclosing for your information a cutting from the *National Herald* giving a special cable from London. Private cables to me also indicate complete confusion at the other end.

There is one other matter which is worrying me. In many Provinces very little is being done by way of propaganda or organisational work in order to prepare them for any contingency that might arise. There is a general feeling that this present impasse will soon give place to an understanding with the Government and so all we have to do is to wait. This seems to me totally unjustified and wrong tactics. It is essential that we should use this time in intensive effort and activity.

I have refrained from issuing any statements on the situation except one in answer to the Viceroy's regarding recent Delhi talks. I felt that I had to say something then because the Viceroy had tried to mislead the people as to the true significance of what had happened. Apart from this statement that I issued I have hesitated to say anything under my name, though I have been writing frequently in the *Herald* unsigned articles. The reason for my not writing or making statements under my name was so that I might say nothing that might possibly create more confusion and come into conflict with what Bapu had said or written. This would have been wrong as it is right and proper that Bapu should give the lead under existing circumstances.

I presume you saw the long resolution passed by the Council of the U.P.P.C.C. four days ago. I must say that I have been agreeably surprised at the discipline and sense of responsibility shown by Congressmen in this Province ever since the crisis arose. This was no doubt due to a feeling that a conflict was coming and they must all pull together. There are elements in the U.P. which show wrong tendencies and there are some people more or less outside the Congress who go about writing mischievous stuff on walls and hoardings. These people are few and have recently come here from the Punjab and Bengal. It is impossible to check such a handful of persons but I do not think much importance will be attached to them. The Congress organisation as a whole here has functioned in these recent weeks with considerable efficiency, responsibility and discipline. The old party groupings have almost disappeared. The Forward Bloc practically does not exist here now.

I do not quite know what the position of our War Emergency Sub-Committee is now. I take it that it does not function and that nothing should be done on its behalf.

I have been keeping Bapu fully informed of developments in the U.P. and I am

sending a copy of this letter to him, partly in case you are at Wardha. I have suggested to him that it would be worthwhile for him to spend two or three extra days in Allahabad after the Working Committee meeting so as to meet a number of U.P. workers and to find out what has been done here as well as to advise us. As you know there is some apprehension in the minds of a number of people that the U.P. has a tendency to go wrong and to precipitate matters. It is necessary therefore to understand the position here and to give directions for future work. I should like you as well as Bapu to spend a few days in Allahabad and we could get people from other parts of the Province to meet you here. From the 26th November onwards we are having our Provincial Conference at Muttra.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

*Enclosure:*

(Cutting from the National Herald)

#### INDIA'S RIGHT TO INDEPENDENCE

(From our London Office)

FRIDAY, November, 10. The position regarding the Delhi talks which has been clarified by Babu Rajendra Prasad's straightforward enunciation of the Congress position has not received adequate attention here. On the other hand, the wordy reiterations of the Viceroy about disunity in the country are obtaining the greatest prominence.

Babu Rajendra Prasad's letter has, however, clarified the position as far as friendly circles are concerned and has undoubtedly clinched the issue, though, as far as the Government are concerned, it has merely resulted in Lord Zetland's closing-down speech.

Reports now arriving from India have practically undone the results of Babu Rajendra Prasad's letter.

They have created confusion again and revived fear and rumours of the Congress playing for tactical advantages and seeking minor improvements and at all events of being not willing to launch resistance to the imperialist war policy.

#### *Gandhiji's Reference*

Mahatma Gandhi's reference to his reliance on the Viceroy's sincerity has been probably misquoted and his statement, headlined "Resistance barred by Gandhi", suggests that he anticipates a settlement as a result of the Viceroy's intervention. The reports also quote Mahatma Gandhi's hope of a declaration of Indian freedom immediately and without any stages. Such hopes appear to be entirely unwarranted and wholly unrealistic from present indications.

Press reports from India belittle the firmness and honesty of the Congress demands and insinuate that the real demand is limited to some concessions.

The opinion is widely held in all parliamentary circles that the situation can be played upon and the issues settled by Viceregal diplomacy. All discussion has been within the ambit of the Balfour Declaration of 1926 regarding Dominion Status and at present only an interim government is the basis of the Viceroy's modified proposals. Indian insistence on independence through a Constituent Assembly does not receive serious consideration at all.

*Fundamental*

It is not recognised that the differences between the Congress and the British Government are fundamental, not justifying the statements of Lord Snell and Mr. Wedgwood Benn suggesting that the differences are small or that there are "qualifications behind the written word" of the Congress.

All circumstances indicate the imperative necessity for an insistence on, a reaffirmation of, and a firm adherence to the position as stated in Babu Rajendra Prasad's statement.

115. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan

Allahabad

14 November 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I enclose copy of a letter from Krishna Menon dated the 6th November (sic). This might interest you.

I have sent him the following cable for his public meeting:

MESSAGE FOR MEETING INDIA HOLDS FAST TODAY AS BEFORE TO  
DEMOCRACY FREEDOM PEACE AND CONDEMNS ALL AGGRESSION STOP IF  
WAR FOR THIS GOVERNMENT MUST STATE AIMS CLEARLY AGREE END  
FASCISM IMPERIALISM SUPPORT SELFDETERMINATION DECLARE  
INDEPENDENCE INDIA ACT UP TO DECLARATION STOP THEN ALL FREEDOM  
LOVING FORCES IN WORLD WILL RALLY AND ESTABLISH NEW ORDER STOP  
INDIA CANNOT SUPPORT PRESERVATION IMPERIALISM

I am afraid many of my cables are not reaching him or are being delayed.

I also enclose copy of a letter I am sending to the Vice-President of the Momin Association. I hope you agree with what I have said.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

Shri Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna.

*Enclosure 1:*

(Copy of letter from V.K. Krishna Menon to Jawaharlal Nehru)

165 Strand  
London W.C. 2  
8 November 1939

My dear Jawaharlal,

Your letter of the 6th October arrived today apparently by sea, but it was none the less topical. The reply of Rajendra Prasad is a brilliant document and has created a great impression. Every effort is being made to centre opinion round the Viceroy's statement which was also broadcast. You must have read the speech of Zetland. The feeling is still that the resignations are the culmination of our protest and that a way will be found.

Those who would not accept my view that Congress is not concerned with a few places and sharing power with imperialism are now beginning to understand. I have adhered to the principles briefly stated that (1) no interim stage is worth considering without a declaration of Indian freedom in terms Congress wants, namely, national independence. All arguments about rights of secession and so on are futile at the moment. (2) Any interim stage is not a "step towards" but merely an administrative device to implement the goal. (3) In that interim stage there can be no question of operating the principle of diarchy or substituting representative institutions for responsible one in fact whatever may be the law. (4) Majorities have rights and that the entire communal problem is wrongly posed.

I was always confident that there would be no weakening on the part of the Congress. I still retain that faith till facts necessitate anything else and there is no reason to think that they will. There were many who feared that the diplomatic offensive would succeed. The Press reports from India were vicious to a degree and the Indian correspondents of the British papers were no exception. It made everyone who was not in the know feel that now it is only a question of time before there is a settlement. India Office was also advised by its friends here in the same strain. I was approached in an air of confidence and friendliness and asked to tell them what the Congress was really after as distinct from what the Congress asked. The rejection of the offer to "expand" the Viceroy's Council to include Congress has come as a shock to those people as they were sure that Congress [would] accept all this with gratitude. The acceptance of offices in the Provinces appears to these people as an indication that Congress is not what it says it is.

In Parliament opinion is gathering round the proposals I submitted to you and a non-party group including Schuster and Reed are now agreed that India must be offered independence but they are still playing about with words about the rights of secession but they are weakening on it. The difficulties in their minds are all the old ones, not so much Moslems as Princes, and how a Constituent

Assembly can be brought about. I have as a first step tried to make them understand that a Constituent Assembly is not what they think it is which I think has been well received. These talks will be continued and the chances are that we will succeed in making them understand that new categories of thought are necessary. With the freedom I have, not possessing a Congress office and yet having the contacts, I shall probably be able to think aloud about what is meant by a Constituent Assembly, and deal it put in digestible doses. This process may perhaps be useful in India itself, only I do not want to spoil the issue by putting forward any ideas which may create prejudice for the reason that it comes from a certain quarter.

The issue of the war is no longer in doubt. This is nothing but an imperialist war in which France even more than Britain is seeking by world war to maintain the domestic position of the 200 families and the colonial position of the French Empire. I hope you get a lot of the world news by Radio. The stand taken by the Congress has made India a world issue. We cannot retreat from that position whatever the consequences.

I would have liked to be in India at least for a while now but of this I see no possibility. Circumstances have become difficult and one carries on against all odds as there can be no giving in. This however is my trouble and my problem.

We are having a public meeting on the 16th about which I have cabled for a written message to the world. This may not arrive even if you have posted it. So please send me a short cable which says everything that needs be said to the world and to the British people. The world Press will be there and even Britain will listen this time. The cable should if possible reach me on the 15th so that I can make full use of it.

Affectionate regards.

V.K. Krishna Menon

*Enclosure 2:*

(Copy of letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Abdul Qaium Ansari, Bihar  
Provincial Jamiat-ul-Momineen, Moradpore, Patna)

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
November 14th, 1939

Dear Mr. Abdul Qaium Ansari,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 30th October 1939 enclosing copy of a letter dated 8th October which you have sent to the President, Indian National

Congress. I am grateful to you for sending me this copy of your letter and thus acquainting me with the viewpoint of the Jamiat-ul-Momineen. I have previously had occasion to meet many of the leaders of your Jamiat and have discussed your problems with them.

I do not know whether the Congress President has replied to you yet or not. Probably you will have occasion to meet him in Patna. But as I have been greatly interested in the future of the Momin community, I am writing this letter to you on my own behalf. I think, however, that in this matter I can claim to represent the Congress viewpoint.

First of all, may I say, that I entirely agree with you in your remark that certain upper class groups among the Muslims have more or less dominated the Muslims in India, much to the disadvantage of the others. This applies even more so to the Hindus, as you well know, where some upper class groups have dominated vast numbers of other people. The problem is essentially similar in both cases. This domination has been cultural, educational, etc. but essentially it has been economic. A group which is economically in a bad condition usually deteriorates culturally and educationally and can be exploited by others.

You have yourself pointed out that owing to the decay of handicrafts during the last century, artisans suffered greatly and the Momins, in particular, were the worst sufferers. Indeed the whole problem of Indian poverty and unemployment is connected with this economic setback in India. New classes associated with the British Government in services, professions and as owners of land, came into prominence, and these became the 'upper classes' you mention. Meanwhile the masses of the country, both Hindu and Muslim, became poorer and poorer and unemployment grew. Probably the class most affected was the great weaver class in India, which comprised many crores.

The essential problem of India thus became one of helping and raising these masses. This was more important than just political freedom, but political freedom was essential as without it nothing much could be done. Hence the demand for Swaraj and independence. But this independence must be of the masses; if small classes controlled it, then the masses would not profit much.

This has been, and is, the outlook of the Congress. The old outlook was to look for services of this group or that under Government. But services can only be for the few, not for the vast numbers. You know also how the Congress has laid great stress on cottage industries, notably handspinning and handweaving. During the last twenty years the handloom weavers have benefited to some extent by this Congress policy. We know that the lot of the handloom weavers today is a terribly hard one and it is the duty of the Government to help in solving their problem. This can only be done by a state policy of helping cottage industries as well as starting other industries.

Apart from this, every effort should be made to help the Momins, and others who stand in need of it, educationally, by giving them both general and technical education. This will give solid strength to such communities when they can stand on their own legs. Reservation of seats etc. weakens a community and, for a great

community like the Momins, it might retard their growth.

Every barrier to state, military, police or other service should of course be removed.

While therefore I entirely agree with you in your analysis of the problem and in your final objectives, I do not think that some of the six points you have given are feasible or desirable. As for the first—the appointment of a minister. But it is very dangerous to lay down a policy that ministers should be appointed communally. If we did that you will realise that all democracy will be at an end, and many Hindu castes or groups will make a similar demand which it will be impossible to fulfil.

As for the reservation of seats for Momins in the Central and Provincial Legislatures, do not you think that such reservation, though perhaps somewhat advantageous to begin with, will be injurious to a great community like the Momins? The kind of reservation we have today has not done us much good. To extend it communally would add to our difficulties. The way to approach the question is to have a large number of suitable Momin candidates stand for election. This would apply to local bodies also, where again reservation would be bad.

As a matter of fact all these questions are beside the mark at present. We are facing a very serious crisis and the world is in turmoil. There are going to be revolutionary changes everywhere, including India. We can no longer think in terms of old constitutions and methods. The old constitution is almost dead and we no longer think of Ministries and the like. For the present we have to think in terms of facing this great crisis and evolving a free India out of it. In this great task I trust the Momin community will take a full and honourable part. By its own action it will thus make for itself a position of dignity in the India of tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

116. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

Sadaquat Ashram  
P.O. Dighaghat  
Patna  
14 November 1939

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I sent a letter with Mr. Masani yesterday. He mentioned to me that you had written to me and sent me the cutting. I told him that I had not received it. As a matter of fact the letter and cutting were received just when I was talking to him but I opened the envelope after he had left.



I have wired to you agreeing to the public meeting on the evening of the 20th instant. But my own participation will be doubtful. But if I am at all able to speak, especially with the help of a loud-speaker, I shall certainly speak.

I see the cloud that is being raised in England. It is always difficult, if not impossible, for us to overtake the propaganda which interested persons can carry on there. We have spoken as clearly as we can and yet either all that we say is not allowed to reach the British public or distorted versions are published. We can once again make our position perfectly clear at the next meeting. We can also discuss with Bapu the future line of action. Lord Zetland's declaration is clear and unequivocal and we should certainly be justified in treating it as the last word for the time being. The dominant question at the present moment is the communal question, as not only the decision of the British Government but also any future line of action that we may decide upon depends to a large extent upon its satisfactory solution. I have this morning received a letter together with copy of a letter addressed to Mahatma Gandhi from Mr. Bashir Ahmed, Secretary, Majlis-e-Kabir Pakistan. I presume he has sent a copy to you also. I am not sure if the views expressed in it are not the views of the Muslim League. Only the League has not yet put them forward. I hope we shall give most of our time to the consideration of these fundamentals at the next meeting, although I fear some time will have to be given to Bengal affairs also.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

P.S. After the above was dictated I received your letter enclosing Mr. Krishna Menon's cable. Our resolutions are clear and they should be made known to the public in Great Britain and elsewhere. I hope you have wired to Mr. Menon reaffirming our position.

Rajendra Prasad

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru  
Swaraj Bhawan  
Allahabad.

#### 117. *To Subhas Chandra Bose*

Camp: Patna  
November 14, 1939

My dear Subhas Babu,

I received your telegram the day before yesterday and have just received another telegram today. Neither the Working Committee as such nor I have any

desire to interfere in Mymansingh Municipal affairs. But as complaints have been received of interference by two gentlemen nominated by the Provincial Executive with some selections made by the local committee, I have forwarded copies of the complaints to the Secretary of the Provincial Committee for such explanations or comments as the Executive Council or the Secretary may have to offer to enable the Working Committee to deal with the complaints and give its decisions on them. When dealing with the matter your opinion will certainly be given due consideration and weight.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

118. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
November 14, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Masani has just given me your letter of the 12th and I hasten to reply.

I am fully conscious of the fears that are troubling you in regard to the communal talks. All the dangers you point out are present. So far as I am concerned, I am certainly not going to fall into any trap. We shall speak about this more later when we meet. Meanwhile my own view is that the communal question does not arise now and Jinnah is not interested in having any talks. His interest in this question was purely political and with the resignation of the Congress Ministries a situation has been created which prevents him from tackling the question in his own way. If he talks to me now I cannot possibly discuss provincial or central political matters because all this depends on the British declaration which is not forthcoming. All I can talk is about purely communal questions and this does not interest Jinnah. The result is that he is waiting for political developments before having any talk with me. I am quite content.

I think we should studiously avoid any discussion of the communal problem except on the basis indicated above. Therefore I do not quite see how we are going to discuss this at the next meeting of the Working Committee. I have not quite appreciated the manner of Bapu's references to the communal problem recently as the problem in front of the political problem which we are facing now.

From this point of view there is no point in discussing the communal problem with the Jamiat or with the Sikhs. But it is perfectly true that the Jamiat and other Muslims as also the Sikhs are alarmed and annoyed at our talks with Jinnah while they are being ignored by us. It seems to me necessary therefore for us to meet them and to explain the situation fully to them and then discuss the political

aspect of the problem facing us.

I would therefore suggest to you that Mufti Kifayatullah might be invited as also one or two representatives of the Akali Dal. Also Master Tara Singh to represent the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee which is rather wobbly. They need not be invited to participate in the Working Committee meeting but to meet some of us for a private talk. I think the 20th November will be the right date as Bapu will be silent then. The 19th will be very full.

I am very sorry to learn that you had another attack of asthma.

I am writing this letter in haste but I hope I have made myself clear.

More when we meet.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

Shri Rajendra Prasad  
Patna.

119. *To The Secretary, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Camp: Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna  
November 15, 1939

Dear Sir,

I have just received the following telegram from Mr. Kiran Shankar Roy:

BPCC PUBLISHED TODAY 68 RULES FOR GUIDANCE OF ELECTION TRIBUNAL  
SOME INCONSISTENT WITH AICC BPCC CONSTITUTION SOME EXCLUDE  
TRIBUNAL JURISDICTION SOME ANOMALOUS WITH EACH [OTHER] OTHERS  
UNWORKABLE INTENDED TO CIRPPLE TRIBUNAL RULES FRAMED  
WITHOUT CONSULTING TRIBUNAL SENDING PETITION TOMORROW  
DETAILING FACTS ALSO SUPPLYING COPY BPCC PRAY WORKING  
COMMITTEE HEAR OUR COMPLAINTS ON FIXED TIME

I trust you have received a copy of Mr. Roy's objection by the time this reaches you.

Please send a copy of the Rules framed for consideration and sanction by the Working Committee at its meeting beginning on the 19th November 1939. Please send me any explanation or comment that you may wish the Working Committee to consider in regard to these rules. If you desire that the Secretary or anyone else on behalf of your Executive Council should be heard by the Working Committee in regard to these rules and in regard to other matters about which I

wrote to [you] in my previous letters, including those written on the 13th November 1939. Please come or send someone else with necessary papers, information and authority to appear before the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad  
President

120. *From Abul Kalam Azad*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

19A, Ballygunge Circular Rd.  
Calcutta  
November 28, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Sarat Babu has sent me yesterday a cheque of Rs. 5,000 and a fixed deposit receipt for Rs.10,075 in connection with the Assembly Party Fund. Now a balance of Rs.521/13/6 remains in his current account; which he has not transferred in order that "the Account may remain open in the Bank for future". As nothing was said in the resolution of the Working Committee for the future he thinks that he will continue depositing the contributions of the members in the Bank as usual. I did not deem it expedient to say anything to him in this connection at present. We shall think over it in future.

He has sent a lengthy letter to me about this matter which he has requested me to present to the next Working Committee. He has taken strong exception to the decision of the Working Committee. I have acknowledged his letter saying that I will present it before the next Working Committee.

I hope you are doing well. I am still as before, yet I have decided to start for Patna on December 4. There we shall have the occasion to meet and talk in detail.

Yours sincerely,  
A.K. Azad

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna.

121. *To Ahmad Bashir*

November 1939

Dear Sir,

In continuation of my letter dated yesterday acknowledging receipt of your letter, may I request you to send me any published literature that may be available on the question of Pakistan to enable me to study the question? If the publications are for sale, they may be sent to me by V.P. Post or by ordinary post, with a bill, the amount of which will be remitted as soon as the bill is received.

Hoping to be excused for the trouble.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad  
President

Ahmad Bashir, Esqr.  
Secretary, Majlis-e-Kabir Pakistan  
Beadon Road, Lahore.

122. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Patna  
December 2, 1939

My dear Kripalaniji,

I have received a letter from Carl Heath, which is addressed also to Mahatmaji and Jawaharlalji. Mr. Carl Heath is the President of the Indian Conciliation Group in England. There is one thing mentioned in it which requires attention. He says that in the White Paper published there, there is a section which contains the complaints of oppression by Muslims in Congress Provinces. I do not know that the White Paper contains also the replies of the Congress Governments which were published from time to time relating to these complaints, but as far as I can judge from the letter, it does not contain them. You will recall that some-time ago there was a proposal that the position should be made clear by publishing on behalf of the A.I.C.C. one consolidated pamphlet containing all the replies. This was, I believe, suggested by Mr. Asaf Ali, and for some reason or other the Working Committee did not at the time either favour the idea or attach sufficient importance to the matter.

If the Congress replies are omitted from the White Paper and only the complaints are printed there, it is evidently a very unfair position from all points of view and we should not allow this kind of misrepresentation to go unchallenged. I would, therefore, ask you to get a summary of the replies

published by the various Provincial Governments of which perhaps you have got copies in your office and take the Pirpur Report and other authoritative publications of the League and publish the replies of all the Provincial Governments in one pamphlet, so that anyone who wants to know the versions of the Ministries concerned, may get the whole thing together in one pamphlet. It may not be necessary to publish the replies in extenso. Our office may summarise them and in doing so no important point should be omitted or effectiveness of the replies should not suffer. You may consult Pandit Jawaharlal in this matter. He must have received Mr. Carl Heath's letter and you can see the portion for this matter there. I am going to write to Mr. Carl Heath at length and will send you a copy of my letter.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

Acharya J.B. Kripalani  
Swaraj Bhawan  
Allahabad.

123. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
6 December 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thank you for your letter. Cripps is coming here on the 8th and after that I shall fix up my own programme. I might go to Bombay before the W.C.

I agree with you that some statements of the kind you mention should be published by us. But if it is done, it should be done well. Unfortunately Kripalani is not here and is not likely to return for some time.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal

P.S. Fazlul Huq has replied to say that he is here on settling this matter and will write to me more fully later! He goes on postponing it.

124. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
7 December 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I enclose a copy of a letter I have received from Jinnah. I think it will be better if I see him before the Working Committee meeting. I intend going to Bombay

about the 14th but I shall fix this date finally after meeting Cripps who arrives tomorrow.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

Shri Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna.

*Enclosure:*

(Copy of letter from M.A. Jinnah to Jawaharlal Nehru)

Mount Pleasant Road  
Malabar Hill, Bombay  
4 December 1939

My dear Jawahar,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 1st December and I thank you for it.

As at present advised I hope to be in Bombay for the next two or three weeks, and if it is convenient to you I shall be very glad to see you and fix up any date that may suit you. Please therefore let me know what date and time will suit you.

As regards Sir Stafford Cripps, I received a letter from him, and I have already replied to him C/o your address as directed by him, and as he is arriving at Allahabad on the 8th, as I understand from his letter, I shall be very glad to see him when he is in Bombay. On hearing from him I shall fix up also the date and time that may suit him.

Yours sincerely,  
M.A. Jinnah

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru  
Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad.

125. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
9 December 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to Jinnah today. This speaks for itself. Stafford Cripps arrived here yesterday. He is going tomorrow to Delhi and

[Simla] and from there to Bombay and Wardha. . . . He will reach Wardha on the 17th.

I enclose a copy of letter that I have sent to Beltie Shah Gilani.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Patna.

*Enclosure 1:*

(Copy of letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to M.A. Jinnah)

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
9 December 1939

My dear Jinnah,

Two days ago I sent you a letter informing you that I intended going to Bombay soon and hoped to meet you there. Yesterday morning I read in the newspapers your statement fixing December 22nd as a day of deliverance and thanksgiving as a mark of relief that the Congress Governments have at last ceased to function. I have read this statement very carefully more than once and have given twenty-four hours' thought to the matter. It is not for me, in this letter, to enter into any controversy about facts or impressions or conclusions. You know my views about these, formed I hope in all earnestness and with a desire to find the truth. It may be that I am mistaken, but I have sought more light and that light has not come.

But what has oppressed me terribly since yesterday is the realisation that our sense of values and objectives in life as well as in politics differ so very greatly. I had hoped, after our conversations, that this was not so great, but now the gulf appears to be wider than ever. Under these circumstances, I wonder what purpose will be served by our discussing with each other the problems that confront us. There must be some common ground for discussion, some common objective arrived at, for that discussion to yield fruit. I think I owe it to you as well as to myself to put this difficulty before you.

You were good enough to show me in Delhi a letter you had received from Bijnor. I enquired into the matter and I am informed that the version of facts given to you is not correct and is wholly misleading. If you would care to have an



explanation of what happened, I could obtain it for you from Bijnor. For this purpose, I would like to have a copy of the letter you showed me in Delhi.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

M.A. Jinnah, Esqr.  
Mount Pleasant Road  
Malabar Hill  
Bombay.

*Enclosure 2:*

(Copy of letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Beltie Shah Gilani)

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
8 December 1939

My dear Beltie Shah,

Thank you for your letter of the 5th. I am glad to learn that Dr. H.C. Mookherji and you have convened a small informal conference of Indian Christians from all over India to meet in Allahabad on the 17th and 18th of this month. I should have liked to have met those who responded to your invitation but unhappily I cannot do so as the very dates you have fixed are dates of the Congress Working Committee meeting.

I have noticed with pleasure that many prominent Indian Christian leaders, both Catholic and Protestant, have dissociated themselves from certain reactionary views which have been expressed by some people who claim to speak on behalf of the Indian Christians. In the past there was a tendency for the Indian Christians to consider themselves as a class apart and cut off from the great majority of the Indian community. This was perhaps natural to some extent, especially in North India where Christianity was associated in the public mind with the ruling power. Unfortunately the religious issue was dominated by this political aspect and Indian Christians looked to the foreign ruling power for protection. As you know Christianity came to India in very early days, long before it spread in Europe, and for hundreds of years it flourished in South India without any political help or hindrance. As a whole, India was remarkably tolerant in matters religious. But later on when the British power became dominant in India, there was an increasing tendency to associate Christianity with this power and most people forgot that Christianity is one of the oldest religions in India, more specially in the South. This association in the public mind with a dominant imperialism had inevitable reactions. On the one side the general public, Hindu and Muslim, reacted adversely to Christianity on political considerations. They felt that it was a symbol of their political subjection and that the ruling power wanted to force Christianity on Indians. On the other hand

Indian Christians began to lean on that ruling power for special protection and thus created further barriers between themselves and the mass of the people.

This was a temporary phase, if we look at things in the perspective of history, and it is bound to disappear with the coming of Indian freedom. Meanwhile it is perfectly true that we have to face a certain psychological friction between Indian Christians and others. This friction can only be removed ultimately by the establishment of freedom in India and thus by removing the cause of it, that is, the political association of Christianity with foreign domination.

The future Indian free state, after we have gained independence, must necessarily be a secular state, that is, the state cannot represent any one religion. While it is a secular state, it must give the fullest freedom in matters of conscious and religious observances, subject only to public order and morality. No other solution is possible. Every other solution will lead to conflict and would be out of keeping with modern conditions and views of state organisation.

It is right that a Constitution should make it perfectly clear that a religious group or minority will have its religious rights protected. You are no doubt aware of the Karachi resolution of the Congress and many subsequent resolutions, in which it has been clearly stated that this protection of religious as well as cultural rights should be made a fundamental law of the Constitution. I take it that we are all agreed about that. Nevertheless one has to remember that the satisfactory working of any law or Constitution requires a great deal of goodwill and a certain psychological background. This goodwill and background can only come if the relations between the Indian Christians and others in India are on a friendly and cooperative basis, or, to put it differently, if the Indian Christians are vital parts of Indian nationalism. If this is not so, friction will continue.

The Indian Christians form a small minority of the population of India. I do not think of religious groups in political terms. We all know that political divisions today are essentially economic and not religious. Therefore it is entirely wrong to consider Indian Christians or any other religious group as a political group. But if for a moment we consider Indian Christians as a political group, it is clear that their numbers are not sufficient for them to play a dominating role. If there is friction between them and the others, it is the others that will have their way. It thus becomes essential from the point of view of Indian Christians that they must get rid of this friction and psychological barriers, and throw in their lot politically and otherwise with Indian nationalism and Indian freedom. Thereby they secure by their own efforts and sacrifices a secure and honoured place in a free India. To rely on a foreign power for protection is a fatal policy even from the point of view of the narrowest self-interest, because no foreign power can or is going to give protection for long.

Indian Christians have, therefore, acted very wisely in opposing the political divisions of the Indian people on the basis of the religious beliefs and in declaring against communal electorates. Such divisions can only injure them without giving any effective protection. In spite of this, however, the Government of India Act of 1935 put them into a separate compartment. This was unfortunate

and yet it was the inevitable development of British policy in India which has deliberately sought to encourage disruptive tendencies in India and thus weaken Indian nationalism and unity. The only way to counter this injurious move of the British Government is to hold tight to the principles which have been repeatedly affirmed at various conferences of Indian Christians which have condemned the communal electorates and such like fissiparous devices. Positively the policy to be pursued should be, if I may say so, one of complete lining up with Indian nationalism in the cause of Indian freedom.

You have suggested that it is necessary to concentrate on discovering a formula whereby the religious rights of people can be secured in the context of democracy. I see no difficulty about this because we are committed to both these concepts, namely, full democracy as well as a protection of religious rights. In effect this has been suggested in all-embracing language in the Karachi resolution of the Congress. If the language can be bettered let us do so by all means. Sometimes it has been suggested that a religious group or minority group should have the right to veto anything which it considers as religious and affecting it. While it is right that anything affecting religious beliefs or practices of a group should only be touched or altered with the full concurrence of that group or with the approval of the majority in it, still any such constitutional rule would lead to all manner of difficulties and absurdities. First of all it is exceedingly difficult to define what exactly is a religious question. Some questions are obviously religious without any shadow of doubt. Others are essentially political or economic, but may be considered by some people to have a religious significance. We have seen recently all manner of economic, political and educational questions criticised from a religious point of view. Thus if any such power of veto was given, it might apply to every single question, howsoever remote from religion it might be. Secondly there are all kinds of minorities and religious groups in the country. Some are so big that they can hardly be termed minorities, others are very small. A rule such as this must necessarily be applicable to all, big and small. This might result in some tiny group possibly consisting of a fraction of 1% of the population resisting all political and economic advance on some fancied ground of religion. This would create an impossible situation and would result in conflict. You tell me that so far as Indian Christians are concerned they have no desire to mix up political and economic questions with religious rights. That may be so, but no constitution can leave these matters vague and lay the foundations of future deadlocks and conflicts. Democracy of course cannot possibly function in these circumstances, but, as a matter of fact, even ordinary progressive Governments can hardly function. Therefore it seems to me that any such idea of a right to veto, or anything like it, cannot be considered in the context of democracy.

What is desirable and necessary is that the views of the smallest minorities should be heard and should not be just ignored. How this is to be done constitutionally I do not know, but it should not be difficult in practice to do this. I do not think that any real difficulty in this respect will arise when the

country is politically awake and alert, especially so in the case of the Indian Christians who are educationally far more advanced than others and who can be expected to keep alert to see that nothing which injures their religious rights is done inadvertently.

You will realise that in this age of revolutionary and rapid change, it is exceedingly difficult for anyone to play the prophet. Nevertheless we can try to lay down right principles and train public opinion in accordance with them, so that when big changes come, they will carry the impress of these principles. Fortunately the Congress for all these years has thought along these lines and has embodied them in various resolutions. The value of these resolutions lies not only in committing the Congress which must inevitably play an important part in the future of India, but also in training public opinion.

Soon after the acceptance of office in the Provinces by the Congress Ministries, it was proposed to have a special department in the A.I.C.C. office to deal with all matters which come up before the Congress Governments. The object of this was to keep the Congress Working Committee fully informed of all developments; to coordinate, in so far as this was possible and feasible, the work of the various Provincial Governments, and to avoid conflicting activities; to make such suggestions as were deemed necessary and helpful to the Congress Governments and to supply them with useful information; and to keep in touch with minority problems so that nothing important was overlooked by the Provincial Governments. Unfortunately such a department never got going properly. I feel that this was a grave mistake on our part. It seems to me very necessary that some such coordinating agencies should exist. Even now, when the Congress Provincial Governments have resigned, it would be helpful to us and to others if a department was created in the A.I.C.C. office to keep in touch with the problems of minorities and religious groups. Such a department of course would not lay down any policy, for that would be the function of the Working Committee or the All India Congress Committee. But it could keep an eye on the problems and the difficulties of minority and religious groups and inform the Working Committee of them.

We are at present living in very abnormal times and no one knows what the immediate future holds for us. There appears to be a big conflict in store for all of us and it is a little difficult under these circumstances to start new departments or to function in the constructive sense indicated above. But it is right that however big the crisis we have to face, we should give thought to other problems also so that we can be ready with our solutions when the time comes. I welcome, therefore, the opportunity that you have given me of dealing with this question and I hope that your informal conference will result in decisions which are profitable both to Indian Christians and the nation.

I have given expression to my own views in this letter, but I have little doubt that they also represent the views of the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

126. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

Patna

10 December 1939

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I have been thinking of writing to you during the last two or three days. My health, however, suddenly took a turn for the worse. This time my old companion asthma did not trouble as much. Other complications arose, including a very serious inflammation of the gums of the teeth and also sinusitis, which caused intense headache and toothache together. For two or three nights I was without sleep and the temperature was also somewhere between 99° and 101.4°. Food was out of question. Last night was somewhat better and I could sleep with the help of some drug.

I have seen Mr. Jinnah's statement fixing 22nd December as the day of deliverance to be observed all over the country to celebrate the resignations of Congress Ministries. I had read to me Bapu's statement and Mr. Jinnah's second statement. My first reaction after reading Mr. Jinnah's statement was that we should tell him that we should not have any further negotiations or talks with him. Maulana was here and he came to see me and he seemed to agree with me. I do not know what your or Bapu's views are. I feel that after this statement any conversation with him will be misunderstood by Congressmen and also others outside the Congress. You will please consider this aspect of the question and consult Bapu also before you give him a final appointment. To save time I am posting a copy to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

P.S. After the above was written I received your letter of 9th December enclosing copy of your letter to Mr. Jinnah. So we have both been thinking on the same line. We may discuss the matter further when we meet.

Rajendra Prasad

127. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
December 13, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am going to Bombay on the 13th from here and hope to reach Wardha on the 17th morning. Cripps will reach Bombay on the 15th morning.

I do not know what to do about Jinnah. I shall consult Vallabhbhai and I have written to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Dighaghat, Patna.

128. *From Mahatma Gandhi*

Bombay  
13 December 1939

RAJENDRA PRASAD  
SADAQUAT ASHRAM  
PATNA

AFTER FULL DISCUSSION SARDAR AND I HAVE DECIDED THAT HE SHOULD NOT  
ATTEND CALCUTTA MEETING

BAPU

129. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive  
Bombay  
14th December 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I got your wire at Ahmedabad yesterday. The Manager of the *Searchlight* met me at Ahmedabad on the previous day. He asked me whether I have received any wire from you, but I had got none at that time. Since receiving your telegram, I have spoken to Sjt. Mavlankar and Sjt. Kasturbhai and they have promised to do their best.

I am sorry to hear that you are not well. Jawaharlal has just come and we all feel that no useful purpose will be served by meeting Mr. Jinnah. It is clear that he does not want any settlement but simply wants to create propaganda against the Congress.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Dighaghat  
Patna.

130. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

## ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive  
Bombay  
14th December 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

You have sent me a complaint endorsed by Bapu against Mr. Devraj Sethi along with your letter of the 10th December. About the same time, I got a report of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Punjab Congress Assembly Party. I am sending you a copy of the same\* and also a copy of my reply to Dr. Gopichand\*\* in this connection.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Sadaquat Ashram  
Dighaghat, Patna.

\* See Appendix.

\*\* See Correspondence—Part II for Vallabhbhai Patel's letter to Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, dated 14 December 1939.

131. *From the Editor, Mathrubhumi*

## THE MATHRUBHUMI PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO. LTD.

Mathrubhumi Buildings  
Robinson Road  
Calicut  
16 December 1939

Dear Rajen Babu,

May I draw your attention to the fact that Travancore Government have prohibited the entry into the State of the Daily and Weekly editions of the *Mathrubhumi*. This is the latest instance of the suppression of civil liberties in that State. I am forwarding herewith, for your kind perusal, a copy of the memorandum submitted to the Government of India by the Directors of the *Mathrubhumi*. The facts mentioned therein will convince you that the ban imposed on us is unjustifiable and that the autocratic action taken by the

Travancore Government affects the fundamental civil liberties of British Indian citizens and institutions. I request you to kindly help us with your moral support and advice in this matter.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.)  
Editor

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Wardha.

Enclosure not included.

132. *From Hakim Md. Alijan*

Sitamarhi  
25th December 1939

Dear Sir,

I take the liberty of forwarding herewith a report of the sitting of the Sitamarhi Sub-Divisional Jamiat-ul-Ulama held here on 23.12.39, for favour of your information, and taking steps as you think proper under the circumstances, for the redress of the grievances of the Muslims here, as also for the fulfilment of our object referred to therein.

I hope this will receive your kind and immediate attention.

Yours sincerely,  
Hakim Md. Alijan  
Secretary, Sub-Divisional Jamiat-ul-Ulama  
Sitamarhi

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
President, Provincial Congress Committee  
Sadaquat Ashram, Patna.

*Enclosure:*

(Copy of resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Sitamarhi Subdivisional Jamiat-ul-Ulama at its meeting held on 23 December 1939)

1. This Committee, while deploring the attitude of some of the members of the Provincial Working Committee towards the representation of minorities on the



various Local Boards in the district, appreciates the sympathetic and generous attitude taken up by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, at the last meeting of the Provincial Working Committee and after. The Committee welcomes the co-option of two Mohammadans, M. Zahid Hussain and Akbar Khan on the Sitamarhi Local Board but rightly feels that the number of representation of the Muslims is far below the percentage fixed by the Lucknow Pact, as well as the assurance given by leaders of the Congress from time to time in this regard. In view of the views already expressed by the Muslim public of this locality as also a definite appeal made on behalf of this Committee on 9.6.39, 11.11.39 and 22.11.39, the members of the Committee had high hopes of the representation of the Muslims over the executive of the Sitamarhi Local Board. But it deeply resents the undesirable tactics played by some of the responsible members of the District Board Congress Party in frustrating the hopes of the Muslim community. This Committee appeals to Dr. Rajendra Prasad to intervene in the matter and see that the post of the Chairmanship of the Sitamarhi Local Board goes to Maulvi Zahid Hussain who, in the opinion of this Committee, is the only right claimant for this job. In order to press the demand of the Muslims before the proper authorities it is unanimously resolved that a mass agitation be organised at once throughout the subdivision and proper and timely representation be sent to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and other Congress High Commands of the Province.

This Committee further authorises (1) M. Mahmood Alam Saheb, (2) Hafiz Ismail Saheb, and (3) M. Sulaiman Saheb to meet Maulana Abul Mohasin Md. Sajjad Saheb of Phulwarisharif, with a view to acquaint him with the feelings of the Muslim community here, and request him for his timely intervention in the matter.

2. This Committee resolves to send a representation to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad acquainting him with the shortsighted policy of the Congress with regard to the representation of the minorities over the Local Bodies and requesting him to offer such advice as he thinks proper to the Provincial Working Committee for giving due consideration to the representation of the Muslim community over the Executive of the Sitamarhi Local Board.

Hakim Alijan  
President

133. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

68 Marine Drive  
Bombay  
28 December 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just received your letter of yesterday. I have written to Tandonji<sup>1</sup> asking him for his advice in the matter of Mr. Devraj Sethi, but if Maulana is so definite

in his views, I do not think it would be wise to differ from him.

I know nothing about what is going on in Bengal. You must write to Dr. Bidhan<sup>2</sup> to see that he is able to deal with the situation. I have just received a report about the Sind situation from Dr. Choithram and I am sending you a copy by tomorrow's post.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Congress President  
Bajajwadi, Wardha (C.P.).

<sup>1</sup>Purushottamdas Tandon.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy.

134. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

Wardha  
December 29, 1939

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I thank you very much for your letter of...th\* December 1939 with the enclosures. I will be interested to know what reply you get from Mr. Fazlul Huq.

I am proposing to stay here for a fortnight more. Asthma is again troubling me for two nights but it is nothing to be anxious about.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

\*Date not legible.

135. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive  
Bombay  
29th December 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the statement made by Dr. Choithram and Prof. Ghanshyam on the Sukkur riots. You know that Mr. Allahbaksh, the

Prime Minister, was here for some days. He came to see me in connection with the attitude of our Party towards his Ministry. He wanted me to help him against the intrigues of the Muslim League which is trying to bring about his downfall. I am afraid, our Party in Sind has not acted with prudence. The present trouble in Sukkur is the direct result of the Munzilgah agitation and the defiance of authority organised by the Muslim League. It may be true that the Ministry was too weak to take strong action in time, but our people cannot escape their share of blame in contributing to their weakness. I have heard a good deal from Jethi Sipaimalani, the Deputy Speaker of the Sind Assembly, who is also a member of our Party. She is still in Bombay. I had a long talk with Kripalani also. We feel that we shall have to do something to set matters right in Sind, otherwise it would be wiser to dissolve our Party and vacate their seats in the Assembly so that the Hindus may be able to organise themselves. With this view I have advised Dr. Choithram and Prof. Ghanshyam to come to Wardha on the 14th January 1940, where we can meet and discuss the whole situation. By that time we shall have the report of Mr. Abdul Qayum who has also left for Sukkur. Mr. Allahbaksh has also left this morning.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad  
Congress President  
Bajajwadi, Wardha.

Enclosure not included.

136. *To Vallabhbhai Patel*

Wardha  
December 31, 1939

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received your letter about Sethi. I have already written to you that I do not propose any interference in the matter at all and you may do whatever you decide; of course, Maulana's wishes are to be respected.

Since you left, Jairamdas<sup>1</sup> has been getting worse and worse. He does not get sleep at night or during the day. He is constantly suffering from something or other and complains that his brain is overworked and is unable to do anything. It is a most peculiar disease, of which I had never seen any case. Bapu is trying to console him, strengthen him. He sometimes thinks of going to Poona, sometimes remaining here, sometimes of going to Segaon. He went to Segaon last night and

has been staying there. His wife and daughter have arrived today.

Rajaji reached here and left, after staying for a day, for Madras. He is on his way back from Delhi. There is nothing particular about him.

The Bengal position is as complicated as ever. I have a letter from Satish Babu and another member of the Tribunal, saying that although they are now assured of cooperation through the committee we have appointed, there is no time for them to go through all the registers of members and correct them, as they consider that there has been a lot of bogus members made and no election can be said to be fair unless it is held on a correct register. They have therefore refused to withdraw their resignations. I had a telephone talk with Maulana. He says that he had also a long talk with Satish Babu, but failed to induce him to withdraw his resignation. This places the Working Committee in an awkward position. Babu has wired Satish Babu asking him to reconsider the situation and withdraw his resignation. The Bengal Executive Council met yesterday and passed a resolution against the Working Committee and the Bengal P.C.C. is meeting on the 6th January 1940. In the meantime, the ad hoc committee has asked the B.P.C.C. and other district committees to deal with the ad hoc committee in regard to elections. The Executive Council has by [a] resolution handed over Rs. 10,000 out of the balance to Subhas Babu in view of the critical situation in the country.

You have seen what happened in Orissa. They are pressing me to recognise the new office-bearers. I have asked Pandit Nilakantha Das and Pt. Godavaris Misra for explanation, but I have not received any yet. I cannot blame them because sufficient time has not elapsed since I wrote to them for their reply to reach me. I feel some hesitation in coming to a decision in the absence of the Working Committee. The action which is proposed is to accept the resolution which is said to have been passed at a meeting, from which Pt. Nilakantha Das and his party had withdrawn after giving the ruling which is said to be wrong under the constitution. The effect of accepting this resolution would be dismissal of the old President and the Secretary and the Working Committee and the appointment of new ones. Please let me know what I should do in these circumstances. I am wiring to them to expedite their explanation. I am sending the whole case separately for the opinion of members of the Working Committee.

It appears that some people have taken objection to the pledge for including spinning in it. Mr. M.N. Roy has issued a statement which you might have seen and I see from papers that Kisan Sabhaites have criticised it which means that Swami Sahajanand, B. Jayaprakash Narayan and some others are objecting to it on the same ground. Probably there may be more.

Yours sincerely,  
Rajendra Prasad

## CORRESPONDENCE

### PART II

1. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow*

Wardha  
1 August 1939

HIS EXCELLENCY VICEROY  
VICEROY'S CAMP

EXCEEDINGLY SORRY CANNOT REACH DELHI FIFTH INSTANT ESPECIALLY AS THERE IS NO PARTICULAR PURPOSE FOR MEETING URGENT WORK DEMANDS EXHAUSTING JOURNEY FROM FRONTIER PROVINCE ANY DATE AFTER TWENTIETH INSTANT WILL SUIT

GANDHI

2. *From Dr. Gopichand Bhargava to Mahatma Gandhi*

Lajpatrai Bhawan  
Lahore  
20 August 1939

My dear Bapu,

I got your telegram but could not write to you a detailed letter owing to some other work.

A public meeting was called in Lahore under the auspices of the Provincial Congress Committee. The Provincial Congress Working Committee had decided to observe Mass Contact Week from the 15th to the 22nd of August, when all the workers are expected to tour in any part of the Province and enroll members. Dr. Kitchlew was to preside over that meeting and inaugurate that week. At the same time speeches regarding imposition of house-tax in Lahore by the Administrator (Municipality having been suspended) were also to be made. That very evening the Punjab Provincial Congress Working Committee have decided to recommend Dr. Kitchlew's name for nomination for the Amritsar City Assembly by-election.

As Dr. Kitchlew did not reach in time I was called upon to preside and start the proceedings. I spoke on the house-tax and was followed by a Muslim leader, Mufti Mohd. Naim. Whilst he was speaking 2-3 men with axes and 4-5 with lathis entered the meeting and cut off the loud-speaker. People began to disperse. I did not call upon the people to stay under the impression that if I were to say anything there might not be a serious rioting. Two of our co-workers tried to snatch away their axes but they were overpowered by the assailants. They broke the lamps and all was dark. Then they challenged me to come down the rostrum. I came down and they started beating me with lathis crying, "Why did you nominate Dr. Kitchlew?" I left that place when they stopped beating me. Some other friends also received injuries. There were many prominent Congressmen

who either left the meeting or hid themselves somewhere.

I recognised one of the assailants. He is an Ahrari and a co-worker of Dr. Satyapal's group. Some friends informed me afterwards that they were also crying 'Ahrar Zindabad'. I was also informed that certain Hindu Socialist friends, of whom some were in the employ of Provincial Congress Committee under the regime of Dr. Satyapal, were also helping them. The assailant whom I recognised is a Muslim and was also an employee of the Provincial Congress Committee during the same regime.

Maulana Habib-ul-Rehman issued a statement to the Press that they were not Ahraris. This was in reply to my statement in which I have said that because I was being punished for the sin of nominating Dr. Kitchlew, the assailant [will] either be [a] Muslim Leaguer or [an] Ahrari who are opposing Dr. Kitchlew. I had thanked them for the honour.

Maulana Habib-ul-Rehman met me on the 16th and asked if I recognised any person. I named the friend. He said he was not an Ahrari but he attended the office of Ahrar very often and passed greater part of his time there. He also said that he suspected two of his volunteers to be party to this incident and he was making further enquiries in the matter and he would punish them.

Dr. Satyapal met me in a private meeting held for the house-tax campaign. There was not a word of condemnation by him.

Another public meeting was held on the 15th. The management of the meeting was made by our assailants. It was held under the auspices of the City Congress Committee, which is now in charge of Dr. Satyapal's party. Dr. Satyapal spoke and did not condemn this action.

I am improving but got a slight rise in temperature in the evening. I am thinking of running away from Lahore for a few days.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Gopichand

Mahatma Gandhi  
Segaon.

Copy forwarded to Babu Rajendra Prasadji for information.

### 3. *From Anugrah Narayan Sinha to Abul Kalam Azad*

Camp: Poona  
7 Yerroada House  
25 August 1939

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I apologise for not writing to you so long in reply to your letter relating to the nomination to District Boards in Bihar. I was long pondering over the problem

and could not make up my mind until I was forced to do when the election reports began to reach me. In making nominations, I am to be guided by three principles laid down in the Local Self-Government Act. I may mention here that the policy to be followed in future is to abolish the system of nomination altogether and with this end in view, a Municipal (Amendment) Bill is pending in the Assembly and has been referred to Select Committee. This Bill provides for representation of Muslim minority on population ratio with freedom to contest general seats. The representation of depressed classes is also to be based on this very principle. System of nomination has been abandoned in this Bill. Since it is not possible to do away with nomination unless the Act has been amended, I am adopting the following formula consistent with the requirements of the Act in dealing with appointment of additional members.

The Act lays down that nomination of additional members should be based upon three principles, viz. (1) to make up for unrepresented interests, such as trade, zemindary, labour, etc.; (2) to give adequate representation to minorities such as Muslims, depressed classes, backward communities, etc.; and (3) to secure the association of persons of experience and of experts.

After a good deal of thought and consultation, I evolved the following formula to give adequate representation to Muslims. As their population varies from district to district, I thought it would be fair to secure their representation on population basis plus 50% of this ratio in each district and if in any district they have not been returned in adequate number by election, to make up the deficit by nomination. In relation to depressed classes, it was not possible to follow this principle on account of limitation of seats; I was advised to guarantee at least two seats on each Board, including the number secured by them. Representation of unrepresented interests like landlords, trade, etc. has to be provided for and it should be noted that in this year's election, landlords who used to dominate before have hardly been able to capture any seat in most districts. Under the third category, viz., experienced [persons] and experts, the usual practice was to take in all the S.D.O.s and such other persons who have been in the Board for some years or who have any special qualifications to be there.

Bearing these factors in mind, I proceeded to appoint additional members whose number varies from 6 to 10 according to total strength of each Board. If I were to follow any other principle I could hardly comply with the directions in the Act. So far I have announced the results of one Board in each division of Chhotanagpur, Bhagalpur and Muzaffarpur and two in Patna. I have stayed further nominations to observe the reaction to these principles.

In regard to selection of Muslim names, I have kept in view the recommendations of Maulana Sajjad and President of the Jamaitul Momin. Muslim Mass Contact has been generally represented by election and in some districts their number has been quite adequate. For example, in Bhagalpur and Patna districts as many as five and four have been respectively returned by election and all of them are Muslim Mass Contact workers. In Chapra, three have been elected and three have been nominated: one Momin, another your nominee,



and the third a pleader of sound views and standing. In Gaya, two were elected and four have been nominated. One represents Momins, one an ex-Muslim Leaguer and the remaining Mass Contact representatives. In Purneah, 11 have been elected and two nominated—one representing an independent party and the other Momin. In Manbhum, two have been nominated and both prominent Muslim gentlemen of Dhanbad and Sadar respectively, only one having been elected. One Muslim official was appointed. In Arrah, the quota according to the above formula came to 4—one having been elected, three were nominated—one representing Momins, one Muslim Mass Contact and one an independent influential gentleman. This is in short the result of nominations made on principles enunciated above. I have now stayed making further nominations and if any other principle is suggested to me consistently with the direction in the Act, I am prepared to follow it. I shall, therefore, await further instructions if you intend to send any.

I shall just take a district and illustrate the points of view which I discussed above. Take the case of Gaya. I have to nominate 10 persons. I have nominated as follows: 4 Muslims, 2 S.D.O.s, one depressed class, 2 landlords and one Socialist = 10.

In this district, there has been no trouble as both election and nomination have been done in pursuance of an agreement between two contesting parties.

As regards particular names, it is impossible to accept any one out of hundreds of names suggested without displeasing the remaining ones. I have, therefore, in acting upon the above principles, ignored the recommendations made by so many persons and interests and have accepted only one such as, in my opinion, may appear most suitable in the circumstances. I am going to nominate two Muslims at Patna as four have been returned by election and all of them belong to Muslim Mass Contact group. It will be unfair to give all seats to them. I am, therefore, taking one nominee of Maulana Sajjad and another a Momin gentleman.

I have dealt with the subject rather exhaustively. I may make it clear to you that this has been a most unpleasant duty which I have to perform and I do not feel quite happy over it. I have no personal desire in the matter and I have kept no other interest but that of the Congress in view when I have made these appointments. I would be quite happy if the responsibility could have been taken by someone else whom I would have been content to assist.

So many representations, so many deputations and so many communications have been received by me that I have often felt bewildered what to do and had I not ignored most of them it would have been impossible for me to make nominations at all. I have done so with a clear conscience and if some interests have not been satisfied or if some dissatisfaction exists, I consider those inevitable in the circumstances.

I am conscious that I am giving you some trouble by inflicting this long note but I think it was not possible to explain my position otherwise. Although I have taken counsel of my colleagues in making these nominations, I take the entire

responsibility upon myself for so doing.

With respectful regards,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
Anugrah Narayan Sinha

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad  
Calcutta.

*4. From Mahatma Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow*

August 29, 1939

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

I thank you for your letter of 26th instant. I reciprocate your wish that the world will be spared the calamity of war. But if it comes and you think my presence necessary in Simla, of course I shall come.

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
M.K. Gandhi

*5. From R.S. Pandit, General Secretary, U.P.P.C.C., Lucknow, to the General Secretary, A.I.C.C., Allahabad*

U.P. PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Lucknow  
September 2, 1939

Dear Friend,

I enclose herewith copy of my telegram to the Congress President sent to Ranchi last night. I see from the papers this morning that the President is not at Ranchi and the meeting of the Working Committee might now take place at Wardha.

May I request you to take the directions of the President regarding our request for extension of date of enrolment this year?

You will remember we wrote to you last year. Then, however, there had been heavy floods in many districts of the U.P. and we had a good case on merits.

There are, happily, no floods this year but the monsoon is unfavourable for work of enrolment. Workers are hampered in their movements and the U.P. peasantry is, generally, unable to pay cash except during harvest time. If other Provinces have also applied for extension may I request you to kindly place before the Working Committee our application for favourable consideration?

The news of the impending general war in Europe, we believe, makes it necessary this year that there should be no fall, as far as possible, in the Congress membership figures. There is likely to be a substantial fall in the U.P. figures if extension of time is not allowed. Our figures last year were 14,44,421. From reports received so far the enrolment is 38,495. Of course this is below the actual number enrolled and represents only the total of such reports as we have actually received up to date. Most workers are busy in the country and have not been able to send their reports. My colleague, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, and I have reason to believe that if extension is allowed we may hope to reach last year's figure if a concentrated drive is organised. As you are aware, the U.P. Provincial Congress Office has recently extended its activities in many directions. It is very desirable to keep up these activities and maintain efficiency. For this purpose it is vital that our income should be maintained. The last date for enrolment, we hope, will be extended to at least 30th September 1939.

Yours sincerely,  
R.S. Pandit  
General Secretary

Copy forwarded to the Congress President, B. Rajendra Prasad, Sadaquat Ashram, Patna.

Enclosure not included.

6. *From Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, and Vallabhbhai Patel to all Provincial Congress Committees*

Wardha  
16th September 1939

Dear Comrade,

For many years past all of us have lived on the verge of a world crisis and preoccupied as we were with our vital national problems, the Congress had often given thought to the approaching crisis and laid down our broad policy in regard to it. Now that crisis has come and war rages in Europe, in addition to the Far Eastern war, which has now been going on for two and a half years. Every Congressman has been deeply moved by this turn of events and has given earnest consideration to our duty at this juncture. Not only the directions of the Congress

during these past years, but also the very basis of the Congress and its reason for existence compel us to play a worthy and effective part in the development of events. We have not been onlookers of events in India passively adapting ourselves to what happened. The Congress has essentially been a body of action and struggle in the cause of India's freedom and has shaped India's destiny for many years. That grave responsibility has to be shouldered afresh by the Congress in this crisis which affects India as well as the rest of the world.

As you are aware the Working Committee have given the most earnest consideration to these developments and have issued a statement in which they have clearly laid down India's attitude. We invite your attention to this statement so that your provincial and local committees and all Congressmen should appreciate the position fully and act in accordance with the advice given. That statement is a dispassionately worded document, clarifying the issues as they affect India, in simple language, and indicating the road that India has to travel in these troubled times. The implications of that statement and the possible developments must be clear to you.

The Committee has viewed the crisis in the widest perspective and has considered the cause of Indian freedom in relation to world freedom. We who claim to labour for great ends in India cannot lose sight of these perspectives. This crisis will not pass, as the Working Committee say, leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. The world is going to be refashioned and India is going to play her part in this refashioning.

Many questions arise as to our day-to-day activities, more especially during this period when our final decision has not been taken. We shall endeavour to answer them as they arise and as they are put to us. As you are aware, a special sub-committee consisting of us three has been appointed to deal with the war emergency and we shall always be at your disposal for reference or advice. Our sub-committee will of course be guided by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress President, Sri Rajendra Prasad.

Two matters, however, have to be borne in mind for they are of essential importance. Whatever the developments might be, we can only face them with dignity and strength if our organisation is well prepared and has put an end to internal controversies and conflicts. No lover of the Congress and of Indian freedom may do anything which impairs our unity and joint will for action. We have all to rise above our petty selves and become, in this crisis of our destiny, true soldiers of India, speaking and acting together with dignity and forbearance and in accordance with the ideals and principles we have cherished.

Our first duty is to tone up our organisation and keep it in a fit condition for whatever demands might be made upon it. Secondly, we must not individually or severally act or speak hastily precipitating a development before its proper time. We must function in accordance with the spirit of the Working Committee's statement and not overreach it or belie it in our words or deeds. That would be a disservice to the larger cause we seek to serve as well as to this unity which is essential in our ranks.

Your provincial and local committees should give the widest publicity to the Working Committee's statement and explain its implications, more particularly the essential need for tightening up our organisation and preparing it for all the difficulties and trials we may have to face. Unity and discipline have to be emphasised, as well as that the final decision has not been taken yet and this will depend on circumstances and developments. Our position has been frankly and clearly stated before India and the world. To that we shall adhere, and seek, above all, to follow paths which lead to world freedom and reorganisation which must be based on our freedom. But any action taken by an individual Congressman, which goes beyond the Working Committee's statement will not only lead to a loosening of our discipline but to a weakening of our cause and to controversy when we have to present a united front. This has to be avoided. Strength will not come to us by individual action or by brave speeches but by discipline and united effort. The hour of trial has come again upon us. Let us be worthy of it.

#### 7. *From J.B. Kripalani to B.C. Verghese*

Camp: Wardha  
17 September 1939

Dear Friend,

Your letter of 16th August 1939 to the President. There has been delay in answering your letter owing to the President being indisposed.

In every democracy there is somewhere some authority for final decision. In every country there must be some supreme authority. In Congress affairs that superior authority resides in the A.I.C.C. The Congress constitution says that all Provincial and other Congress Committees, in the last resort, have to carry out the wishes of the open session of the A.I.C.C. Whenever the session is not sitting the resolutions of the A.I.C.C. have to be carried out. The P.C.C.s are organised under the constitution which gives the supreme powers to the A.I.C.C. The constitution provides that if the orders of the A.I.C.C. are not carried out a Provincial Congress Committee may be dissolved and another Committee may be formed with the nominees of the Central organisation to function. You will, therefore, see that the decision of the Working Committee is not inconsistent with the rules of the constitution. If the Bengal P.C.C. Executive cannot carry out the decisions of the A.I.C.C., it must resign executive office. Being in office it cannot refuse to carry out the wishes of the properly constituted superior authority. If it does, the Congress constitution provides for a remedy.

In every constitution there are possibilities of a deadlock if the rules of the constitution are not carried out in the spirit of the constitution. In England the King may refuse to carry out the spirit of the constitution by doing many acts which, by custom, [he] is not entitled to; in such case there will be [a] deadlock. This

can only be dissolved by Parliament taking action. The Congress parliament is the A.I.C.C. In general such deadlocks must be dissolved by it.

Second point is that there must be some difference between protest and actual defiance. I am afraid this difference disappears when the protest takes the shape of public meetings consisting of Congressmen and non-Congressmen; not only this, but in most of the meetings that were held, non-Congressmen, that is, members of the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and other organisations that are anti-Congress, predominate. Such protests carried out against definite orders of the President constitute disobedience and indiscipline. It is quite possible that the orders of the President might be unconstitutional. In that case an appeal can always be made to the Working Committee. It was incumbent on Shri Subhas Chandra Bose to listen to the requests made to him by the President. In his days Shri Subhas Chandra Bose issued orders that were not quite consistent with the constitution. These orders were carried out by the parties concerned. For instance in the case of Delhi P.C.C. Shri Subhas Bose gave a ruling which was contrary to the constitution. This ruling was carried out by the Delhi P.C.C. While carrying out the decision of the President they finally appealed to the Working Committee. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose knew this procedure and if he failed to adopt it he is clearly responsible for such failure.

Yours sincerely,  
J.B.K.  
General Secretary

Shri B.C. Verghese, B.A. (Hons.)  
Mansarovar  
Triplicane, Madras.

8. *From the Chairman of the All India Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee to all Congress Prime Ministers*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL.

Purushottam Mansion  
Opp. Opera House  
Bombay-4  
17 September 1939

Dear Prime Minister,

I am addressing you in regard to the war situation that has arisen and which affects India and your Government vitally. Many of the Congress Ministers have

been asking as to what their attitude should be in dealing with this situation. It is obvious that difficult and delicate problems are arising and will arise from day to day, and it is highly desirable that a uniform policy, in consonance with Congress principles and policy, should be followed by all the Congress Provincial Governments. Some of these problems were considered at the Prime Ministers' Conference held in Poona last month and a general agreement was arrived at in regard to the policy to be pursued. Those decisions and directions have to be borne in mind and followed now.

The policy of the Congress Governments must necessarily be governed by the general Congress policy at this juncture. The Working Committee has issued an important and weighty statement on the present situation. Though this statement does not decide finally about our future course of action, it clarifies the position and indicates our objectives and the alternatives before us. In the course of the next few weeks it may be possible to take a further and more definite decision which may lead to consequences involving the resignation of Congress Ministries. But to say that such resignation is inevitable would be wrong. There are other possible developments. In any event Congress Ministries must realise that there is a possibility of conflict on wider national issues and this will vitally affect their future. They have therefore to keep themselves in readiness for any eventuality.

Meanwhile Congress Ministers are invited to study carefully the Working Committee's statement and to appreciate all its implications. In any conversations with the Governor or any communications with the Government of India the background of this statement has always to be borne in mind and emphasised. They have to make it clear to their respective Governors that the Working Committee's statement is not to be treated lightly and those who do so will do so at their peril.

It is also desirable that early steps be taken to pass a resolution in the Provincial Assemblies giving full support to the position taken up by the Working Committee in their statement. Where Provincial Assemblies are not in session steps may be taken to call a special meeting at an early date for this purpose. Where this is not possible the Government may adopt the resolution as a government. A draft of the resolution to be adopted is being sent to you herewith.

One essential fact has to be kept in mind, more especially during this intervening period before a final decision is taken by the Congress. The Provincial Ministries should not allow in practice any limitations of their powers or permit the Government of India or the Governor to encroach on their domain or functions directly in their Province. In the so-called secondary war activities such as control of prices, profiteering, production, etc., the Provincial Governments should take full part and keep them under their complete control. In the primary war activities, such as enrolment of recruits etc., they should hold their hands and not commit themselves till a final decision is taken.

Many difficult problems will of course arise and it is not easy to enumerate them. Ministers will have to exercise their discretion or refer them to us for

advice. It is clear, however, that Ministers cannot agree to anything that goes against Congress principles or is likely to humiliate them.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.)  
Chairman

Enclosure not included.

9. *From Asaf Ali to Mahatma Gandhi*

Kucha Chelan  
Delhi  
21 September 1939

My dear Mahatmajī,

I enclose the copy of a letter I have sent to Jawahar today. The suggestions I have made may interest you.

\* \* \*

With respects,

Ever yours sincerely,  
Asaf

\*\*\*Portion of letter illegible.

*Enclosure:*

(Copy of letter from Asaf Ali to Jawaharlal Nehru)

21 September 1939

Please accept my sincerest congratulations on your masterly statement of India's case. I apologise for my importunity but some of the immediately preceding happenings and certain statements had made me feel a little nervous. I was not so foolish as to apprehend that the Working Committee would not rise to the occasion but I do confess that I was a little hasty in imagining that the magnitude of the occasion and its critical nature might overshadow the essential features of India's picture. Anyway India has every reason to be proud of her leaders and the country is especially indebted to you for helping to raise her stature among the self-respecting peoples of the world.

It may sound a little irrelevant but over and above the normal duties of an Indian national, if there is anything for which I may be wanted my services, for what they are worth, are at your disposal.

The signs point to the present struggle being a long-drawn-out one. I do not



know what view you take of Russia's uncertain movements in unexpected directions; but I feel that it has introduced a factor into the existing complexities which may have very far-reaching consequences in relation to India and the Middle East if the war lasts longer than a year. You must already be aware of the fact that as at present organised India's defences, on both the North-West and North-East frontiers, are far from being invulnerable. This to my mind creates a situation which calls for the most strenuous efforts to put our house in order. In case the conflagration comes to our borders unity in the country will be the most imperative demand. I am afraid I am again breaking into unwarranted importunity but you may excuse it on the ground that it is due only to my anxiety to place before you a viewpoint some aspects of which, I feel, require special emphasis. I approach the following question from this point of view.

As you know the present leadership of the Muslim League has failed glaringly at a most critical juncture. It is entirely due to the heterogeneity of an ill-assorted group. Although the word 'mass contact', of which you were the first author in the Indian political life, has become their battle-cry, I think we have reached a stage when real mass-contact can and should be attempted by Indian Muslims who possess the requisite vision. This however will largely depend on a few preliminary steps which I think either your War Committee or the Working Committee must take to pave the way for a move onward. Among those preliminary steps the following may be mentioned as deserving of special consideration.

1. The Working Committee should issue what may be the equivalent of a White Paper embodying a restatement of such fundamental rights as affect the minorities with a further statement that in any Constitution which may be drawn up for India they shall be incorporated and shall form the basis of the adjudication of the minorities' claims and grievances by the highest tribunal of India.

2. By way of an additional safeguard the constitution of a permanent Vigilance Board for every Province may be announced. The personnel of such Boards should comprise two members of the aggrieved minority and one from the other minorities. The Boards should have the authority to investigate the validity of such grievances as are not capable of adjustment by courts of law but may only pertain to the general policy of any Provincial Government; and their reports should be the subject of final disposal by the highest tribunal. I am afraid this proposal contemplates more than one Vigilance Board in every Province. But even a multiplicity of such Boards can do no harm to us. In spite of wild assertions and unproved statements being in circulation a proper machinery set up to determine the validity of grievances should, in my opinion, check irresponsible allegations.

3. The White Paper to which I have already referred, may contain an analytical account of all the ameliorative legislative and other measures which Congress Provincial Governments have undertaken with a view to explaining in detail the far-reaching effect such measures have had on the economic condition

of the masses—both the peasants and the working classes. For instance, I am quite clear in my mind that the various agricultural relief measures, whether in respect of indebtedness or in respect of fixing of the scale of rents and the inalienability of agricultural land etc., have improved the lot of many millions of Muslim peasants and workers. As against this the cry of Muslim property etc. being in danger can be made to look ridiculously thin. It is really only a few persons who possess large properties who may have been affected by such legislation and it is our duty to make it clear to the millions of others that their name is being exploited by these few for their own personal ends. I do not suggest a controversy between the League and the Congress. But I do certainly insist on Muslim Congressmen and other nationalists being fully armed with facts and figures to meet wrong arguments.

4. A consolidated White Paper should also contain a restatement of the measures adopted by all the Congress Governments to remove glaring disparities in services. I know such statements have been issued by various Governments but they have not been collected in one place.

5. In my opinion it is also essential that as regards the question of safeguarding the religious and cultural interests of the minorities a clear statement may be made that any questions which are not fully covered by the declaration of fundamental rights can be subject of amicable discussion and determination at a round table.

If these preliminary steps can be taken, and I think they should be taken immediately, I am absolutely certain that nationalist Muslims will be fully equipped with the necessary material to join issue with the reactionaries.

Of course it is for you to decide whether this can be done by Working Committee at its next sitting or not. I fully recognise the inadvisability of Hindu Congressmen entering into a controversy with the League or other political organisations. This is not the time for it. But sooner or later, as the situation develops and ripens for effective adjustments, somebody has got to clarify these issues and I think the Muslim nationalists ought to take a lead. Even those of us who have a larger vision of things can scarcely afford to overlook some of the immediate problems which call for attention even as aspects of a transitional stage.

#### 10. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Pattabhi Sitaramayya*

PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

SARDAR AWAY YOU SHOULD SILENTLY WATCH EVENTS AND WEAR THORNY CROWN IF IT DESCENDS ON YOU KEEP TOUCH WITH ME

GANDHI



Dr. Rajendra Prasad with Mahatma Gandhi and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

exhaustive and it sets out in clear language all the doings of the Praja Sangh from its very inception. Mr. Deo and the Sardar are in the know of the details. Mahatma Gandhi also knows something. All of them have expressed their opinion from time to time, yet the agitation is not abating. Since the publication of the report it is on the increase. I understand that a copy of the report has been supplied to you. From the perusal of it and the account that is given above you will see that the agitation is wholly unjustifiable. You may consult Mr. Deo and the Sardar.

The Police investigation into the offences was conducted partly by the officers lent to the State by the Bombay Government and partly by a retired officer of the status of the District Superintendent of Police in British India. The Magistrate before whom the trial is going on is also from British India and lent by the Bombay Government. The services of an officiating District Judge have been requisitioned and it is likely that the Bombay Government will supply one. Thus all precautions have been taken to secure fair trial of the cases that are pending. The agitators are not satisfied with all this. It is difficult to find out what they want. It seems however that they want to coerce the State to withdraw the cases against some of the ring leaders, leaving their tools to their fate. With that end in view they are holding meetings and passing resolutions condemning Davar, Deshpande, Deo, Diwakar, Koujalgi, Hardikar and others. The meetings are not largely attended, but the poison of communalism is having its effect. The leaders of the Congress in the Province are not disposed to raise any dust of controversy and thus divert the attention of the people at this critical juncture. This attitude of the leaders has encouraged the agitators.

In this chaotic condition, the President of the Belgaum District Congress Committee called a meeting of the members of the Committee as well as others interested in the question to consider the statement of the Working Committee on the war situation and also to find out ways and means to implement the same. About eighteen men who are engaged in the agitation sent a reply to the President's invitation in which they have stated that the Ramdurg question being of primary importance must be solved first before any other question is taken up. They have further hinted that the chances for unity are very slender if that question is not solved. In the letter they do not make any concrete suggestion for solving the Ramdurg question. They did not attend the meeting. They are bent upon carrying the agitation for purposes which are not apparently in the interest of the accused in the Ramdurg affair that are standing their trial. In this connection it must be noted that many of the ring leaders of the Ramdurg Praja Sangh are out of the State and some are absconding. Excepting the malcontents the rest of the subjects of the State are quiet and following their usual avocations. It is only the disgruntled outsiders that are creating the trouble, and the result has been that the minds of the gullible public are being diverted. Your appeal to sink all internal differences is falling on deaf ears. The attempts of local leaders in this direction are misconstrued. The Provincial Congress Committee consists of heterogeneous elements. The President of the Committee is a member of the

Working Committee of the Forward Bloc. The representatives of the Mysore State who held a dominant position in the Provincial Committee have little interest in our problems and they are now engrossed in their own questions. The tendencies of many of the members cannot be said to be above communalism and all that it denotes. The present unhealthy condition is due to the activities of some members of the Provincial Committee. The tried old leaders of the Province are being openly charged with partiality and even corruption. A public man of the status of Mr. Deo is not free from this charge. The Sardar and even Mahatmaji are put down as mere tools in the hands of Deo, Deshpande and Co. You can imagine the fate of the Rajah and his Government. Under these unfortunate conditions, I appeal to you, in your capacity as President of the All India States' Peoples' Conference, and also as President of the Congress War Committee, to look into this matter and administer a strong admonition to the mischief-mongers. I would not have troubled you if the times were normal. But the serious conditions in the Province demand your attention at this critical time. If the Province is left to itself it will not be able to play its part at this crisis as it did in the past.

Hoping the matter will receive early attention at your hands,

I remain,  
Yours ever in service,  
(Sd.)  
Secretary  
District Congress Committee  
Belgaum

Copy to:

Mahatma Gandhi.  
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.  
Sankarrao Deo.  
Babu Rajendra Prasad.

12. *From Ram Kishan, General Secretary, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, Lahore, to the General Secretary, All India Congress Committee, Allahabad.*

PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Bradlaugh Hall  
Lahore  
2nd October 1939

Dear Sir,

I am sending herewith the resolutions passed by the Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. [at] its meeting on 1st October. Kindly note and oblige.

Yours sincerely,  
Ram Kishan  
General Secretary

*Enclosure:*

(Resolutions passed by the Working Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee at its meeting held on 1 October 1939)

The Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. accords its whole-hearted support to the resolution on the War Crisis passed recently by the Congress Working Committee.

The Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. assures the Congress Working Committee that the P.P.C.C. will steadfastly and tenaciously stand by the Congress Working Committee and offer its unstinted and loyal cooperation in all emergencies arising out of the War Crisis. The Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. further calls upon all Congress Committees and Congressmen and women in the Province to be prepared to face any emergency.

While the Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. appreciates the restraint and discipline exhibited by the large body of political workers in the Province in their speeches and writings on the war question, and while the Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. renews the appeal for restraint and discipline in the light of the war resolution of the Congress Working Committee, the Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. condemns the detention, gagging and arrests of a number of nationalist workers in the Province against whom action has been taken under the I.P.C. and the Defence of India Ordinance. The Working Committee is of the considered opinion that the campaign of repression renewed with redoubled vigour by the Punjab Government is utterly unjustified and unwarranted and belies the assurance given by the Government of India to the effect that the Defence of India Ordinance would be used with the utmost caution.

The Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. warns the Punjab Government that their present policy of repression may influence materially the final attitude of the Congress towards the war.

The Working Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee hereby appoints a War Sub-Committee consisting of Dr. S.D. Kitchlew (Chairman), Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, M.L.A. (General Secretary), Lala Sham Lal, M.L.A., and S. Sohan Singh Josh with powers to coopt. The Committee is empowered to deal with any emergency which may arise out of Congress attitude towards the war crisis.

13. *From Gopinath Bardoloi to Vallabhbhai Patel*Gauhati  
Assam

24 October 1939

My dear Sardarji,

I am sure it is useless to think of the last resolution on War given us at Wardha on 12th October. It must have been amended in accordance with the Viceregal statement, and I expect that the amended resolution must be on its way to us. We will have our government meeting on the 30th October, and we expect to receive the draft before that date if it is necessary to pass a resolution before resignation. If we do not get one, we will draft one. Our sitting of the Assembly is fixed for the 30th November. It is absurd to think that we shall be waiting till then. On the other hand on account of Ramjan and Jagaddhatri Puja we cannot have any sitting before 22nd November, which is not much different from 30th November. You must therefore allow us to tender our resignation without the resolution passed in the Assembly. The Ministry consisting of 8 Ministers, with the exception of one, would be glad to resign on this issue—and even the 8th is not unwilling.

An alternative Ministry may not be impossible in our Province, although I am sure it would not be quite an easy affair. But whatever it is, Congress portion of the Party, consisting of thirty-three in a party of fifty-seven members, would be broken-hearted if they are not allowed their due share in this rightful fight. Therefore, I hope there will be no condition in our resignation. I am writing all this to avoid delay of further correspondence.

I shall be obliged for an immediate reply. Our offices open on the 30th October.

Yours sincerely,  
Gopinath Bardoloi

Copy to Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendra Prasad for favour of early advice.

Gopinath Bardoloi

14. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Subhas Chandra Bose*Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
23 November 1939

My dear Subhas,

It is only today that I find a moment to acknowledge your letter and wire. As you know, I attend the Working Committee only when required and deal with

only those matters that are referred to me. But having received a letter, I read it to them and told them that if they had not confidence in the present Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and had sufficient reason for it, I agreed with you that they should dissolve it. Any piecemeal measure would fail and only cause irritation.

But I confess that your letter has appeared to me to be a challenge. You have evidently no confidence in the Working Committee. You regard its ban on you as a vendetta. As you know, I am party to the ban which was voted unanimously. Who is to decide between you and the Working Committee? You have never submitted to the ban.

As to action by the Working Committee, I dissent from you. Your way is not mine. For the time being you are my lost sheep. Some day I shall find you returning to the fold, if I am right and my love is pure.

Ever yours,  
Bapu

15. *From Jawaharlal Nehru to M.A. Jinnah*

Allahabad  
December 9, 1939

My dear Jinnah,

Two days ago I sent you a letter informing you that I intended going to Bombay soon and hoped to meet you there. Yesterday morning I read in the newspapers your statement fixing December 22nd as a day of deliverance and thanks-giving as a mark of relief that the Congress Governments have at last ceased to function. I have read this statement very carefully more than once and have given twenty-four hours' thought to the matter. It is not for me, in this letter, to enter into any controversy about facts or impressions or conclusions. You know my views about these, formed I hope in all earnestness and with a desire to find the truth. It may be that I am mistaken, but I have sought more light and that light has not come.

But what has oppressed me terribly since yesterday is the realisation that our sense of values and objectives in life as well as in politics differ so very greatly. I had hoped, after our conversations, that this was not so great, but now the gulf appears to be wider than ever. Under these circumstances, I wonder what purpose will be served by our discussing with each other the problems that confront us. There must be some common ground for discussion, some common objective arrived at, for that discussion to yield fruit. I think I owe it to you as well as to myself to put this difficulty before you.

You were good enough to show me in Delhi a letter you had received from Bijnor. I enquired into the matter and I am informed that the version of facts



given to you is not correct and is wholly misleading. If you would care to have an explanation of what happened, I could obtain it for you from Bijnor. For this purpose, I would like to have a copy of the letter you showed me in Delhi.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. *From Gopinath Bardoloi to the General Secretary, A.I.C.C.*

ASSAM ASSEMBLY CONGRESS PARTY

Gauhati  
13 December 1939

Dear Friend,

With reference to your letter No. P.L.-1/2502, dated December 8th, so far as I am aware the Pirpur Report contains no allegations against the Congress Coalition Government of Assam and consequently there was no occasion for issuing any statement by way of answering the charges against Congress Ministries.

Latterly, however, Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Bengal Premier, in the course of a statement issued from New Delhi, accused our Government of oppression against immigrants from Bengal. I lost no time in replying to the statement to refute the allegation. Government also followed with a Press Note inviting Mr. Huq "either to prove the charges made by him or to withdraw them". Nothing, however, has since been heard from him.

The relevant extract from Mr. Fazlul Huq's statement, my reply thereto, and the Assam Government's Press Note are enclosed herewith.

Yours sincerely,  
G.N. Bardoloi  
Leader

The General Secretary  
All India Congress Committee  
Swaraj Bhawan  
Allahabad.

*Enclosure 1:*

(Extract from A.K. Fazlul Huq's statement, dated New Delhi, 23 October 1939)

"Take the case, again, of the Assam Government stopping the emigration of Bengalis into Assam. Not only has such emigration been stopped but many

immigrants who had settled in certain areas have been evicted and bundled out of the Province."

*Enclosure 2:*

(Statement issued by Gopinath Bardoloi, Assam Premier, on 27 October 1939, in reply to A.K. Fazlul Huq's statement regarding the treatment of Moslems in Congress Provinces)

"If the charges levelled against the Congress Government in the Provinces were of the same nature as those against the Assam Government, I can only say that the falsity of the charges need not be taken serious notice of. The Assam Government have not enunciated any policy till now by which any action referred to by the Bengal Premier can in the least be justified. What is prevailing in Assam in this matter (immigration policy) is the policy which was pursued by the last Assam Government which was chiefly a Moslem League administration.

"The facts as they stand are just the opposite to what the Bengal Premier has attempted to make out. While local Assamese have been successfully evicted from grazing and other reserves which the Government are maintaining for the improvement of cattle and for the protection of backward peoples, the Bengal Premier's compatriots are swarming into these areas and are creating all kinds of obstructions to local officers in the discharge of their duties in preservation of these areas.

"The Bengal Premier is apparently acting as a member of the opposition to the Assam administration but will it be impertinent on our part to inquire why, in spite of his profession for better administration in Bengal, such large numbers of immigrants have to cross the borders of Bengal and do not remain content with the benefits of his happy administration? We, however, expect to enunciate our immigration policy shortly."

*Enclosure 3:*

(Press Note issued by the Government of Assam in reply to the charges made by the Bengal Premier)

"Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Premier of Bengal, is reported to have made the following remarks regarding the present Assam Government in the course of a recent statement to the Press: 'Take the case, again, of the Assam Government stopping the emigration of Bengalis into Assam. Not only has such emigration been stopped but many immigrants who had settled in certain areas have been evicted and bundled out of the Province.'

"A person in the position of the Premier of Bengal is expected to know a

Provincial Government's powers in regard to immigration within India from or into a Governor's Province. The Government of Assam have no power either to stop the immigration of people from outside the Province or to bundle them out of the Province.

"Any statement to the effect that this Government have used any such power in respect of Bengalis is the reverse of truth. Indeed, the incessant flow of immigrant cultivators has been a problem which has engaged the attention of Governments in Assam for over ten years. Where these immigrants have occupied land reserved for public purposes or have taken up areas reserved for the indigenous people, there have been evictions under the standing orders of previous Governments.

"The Congress Coalition Ministry not only have not issued new orders so far on the subject, but have been considering how far the restrictions sanctioned and enforced by previous Governments can be relaxed without endangering the interests of the local people.

"Any suggestion that this Ministry has pursued a policy different from that of its predecessors is to suggest something which is untrue and mischievous.

"The Government of Assam would, therefore, invite Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Premier of Bengal, either to prove the charges made by him or to withdraw them."

### 17. *From Vallabhbhai Patel to Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive  
Bombay  
14 December 1939

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

I have received your letter of the 10th December 1939 forwarding a report of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee of your Party. I have carefully gone through the report and I must confess that I am not satisfied about the recommendations made by that Committee that Mr. Devraj Sethi's matter should be closed by accepting an unqualified apology to be given by him in the interest of the Party. I have nothing to say about the other two matters as they do not involve any question of moral reflection. Your first instinct as Leader of the Party in obtaining the resignation of Mr. Sethi from his Assembly seat was correct, but I do not see any reason why his resignation should not have been sent to His Excellency the Governor straightaway. As an organization which is out to set forth higher standards of purity and integrity in public life, we cannot afford to overlook such grave indiscretion of our own men. In my opinion, Mr. Sethi should be asked to

resign from the Assembly without further delay. We have been pestered with petitions against him from both Congressmen and non-Congressmen since the decision was given by the Tribunal criticising Mr. Sethi's conduct in this matter.

Yours sincerely,  
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, M.L.A.  
Lajpatrai Bhavan  
Lahore.

18. *From Biswanath Das to J.B. Kripalani*

ORISSA ASSEMBLY CONGRESS PARTY

Camp: Berhampur  
14th December 1939

My dear Kripalaniji,

Received your letter No. P.L.-1/2502 dated 8th December 1939 while I am in camp. There are certain files relating to this question. It is not possible for me to get hold of those files at present. They are Secretariat files and could only be found in the Secretariat. Pirpur report was not available to me in spite of my request to your office. To my knowledge there is little about Orissa. Mr. Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League, has referred the matter to the Viceroy for the reason that the Governors have got statutory responsibility for the minorities. The Governor of Orissa in his reply to the address of the Muslim Association, Balasore, for more appointments and more educational facilities etc., stated in 1938 that he has not received any complaints from Muslims that any injustice has been done to them and that the Ministry has been generous to the elaims of the Muslim minority. This is what was stated publicly by the Governor of Orissa in Balasore and is reported. Hon'ble Mr. Huq, the Prime Minister of Bengal, visited Cuttack to preside over the Muslim Students' Conference in 1938 along with his colleague the Nawab of Dacca. In a statement to the Associated Press, the Prime Minister of Bengal declared that the interest of the Muslims in Orissa is safe in the hands of the Ministry and said so many other good things, which need not be mentioned here. Again Mr. Huq, while addressing the Ministerial Party in Sind, exhorted them to follow the lead given by Orissa.

There are in the Secretariat files to show how we, by our generous act towards the Muslim community, have done certain things which were regarded by the Secretaries including the European Secretaries as unfair to other communities.

There has never been a case in the period of 28 months of our existence wherein the Governor or any of the Secretaries differed from us in any of our acts regarding minority communities or Muslims. I have not got with me here in camp either the reply of the Governor of Orissa or a copy of the statement of the Bengal Premier, stated above. I have written to Sri Nityananda Kanungo, formerly Minister of Revenue in Orissa, to pick up these and send them to my office. I will see that copies of these are communicated as soon as I reach Cuttack.

Yours sincerely,  
Biswanath Das

Sri J.B. Kripalani  
General Secretary, A.I.C.C.  
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad.

19. *From Purushottamdas Tandon to Vallabhbhai Patel*

Swamibagh  
Agra  
December 31, 1939

My dear Sardarji,

I have just received here at Agra your letter No.586 of the 25th instant redirected from Allahabad.

In connection with Shri Devraj Sethi's case I, as President of Servants of the People Society. Before we took the final step of taking his resignation from the Society. Sethiji tendered, at our instance, his resignation from the Punjab Legislative Assembly to Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Leader of the Congress Party in the Assembly. I myself wired or wrote at the time to Dr. Gopichandji to expedite the acceptance of Sethiji's resignation. This was, I think, about ten months ago. I am not aware as to why Dr. Gopichandji did not then move in the matter. Probably he did not wish that a seat held by the Congress Party in the Assembly should be vacated and re-contested. It was a little time after this that we felt it necessary that Sethiji should not continue to be a member of our Society.

If the present question of Sethiji's resignation from the Congress Assembly Party arises out of the same old matter, I am inclined to think that Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, who knows all the details on which we based our decision, may, as Leader of the Congress Party, be given the sole discretion to decide as to whether Sethiji should or should not continue to be a member of his Party.

With pranams,

Yours very sincerely,  
Purushottamdas Tandon

Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel  
President, All India Congress  
Parliamentary Sub-Committee  
68 Marine Drive, Bombay.

## APPENDICES

## *1. Note on Kashmir Movement*

1. It is not necessary to discuss the events that took place in Kashmir in 1931-32. Suffice it to say that this agitation was started by the Muslim community with loot, arson, incendiarism, conversions, kidnapping and desecration of religious places and images of Hindus and Sikhs. As a result of an enquiry made by Sir Barjor Dalal and Mr. L. Middleton, I.C.S., it was established that this movement was violent and communal from its very inception and was directed against Hindus and Sikhs of the State.

2. The leaders of this movement at its earlier stage felt that the British Government was on their side and they deliberately strove to create such conditions as to make British intervention inevitable. Accordingly the services of British officers were lent to the Kashmir Government because the agitators expressed want of confidence in Indian officers of the time. The reports of those British officers cannot therefore be regarded as partial to the minority community and a reference to Mr. Middleton's and Mr. Jardin's reports will show that the statement of facts made in para 1 above represents the correct description of the nature of the movement. From a perusal of these reports it will appear that hundreds of houses belonging to non-Muslims were burnt in Mirpur district, Hindu shops and houses were looted at numerous places in Kashmir and Jammu including Poonch, the whole of the Hindu population had to flee from many parts of the Mirpur district and numerous Hindus were killed, converted, their bodies cut, and their beards cut off. The temples of Hindus and dharamsalas of Sikhs were desecrated and burnt. These occurrences do not find a parallel anywhere in the modern history of India.

3. Mr. S.M. Abdullah started this agitation and he designated his organization as Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference. Numerous reports are available to show that he directly incited and infuriated the Muslim masses against Hindus and thus endangered the life, property and religious places of the Hindus. By his conduct and acquiescence he encouraged violence and communal fanaticism. At times when as an individual he ought to have condemned such violence and disassociated himself from it, he as the head of this organization countenanced it with impunity. He always pressed for representation in services and public bodies on communal basis. He even agitated against the joint electorate system which was in practice in municipal bodies and got it changed into separate electorate. He continued to carry on vigorous propaganda against non-Muslims up to the beginning of 1938.

4. There is ample evidence to prove that Mr. S.M. Abdullah and the Muslim Conference members were supported and led by the Qadianies, Kashmir Committee (a Muslim organisation at Lahore), and the Muslim League in British India. The sole aim of Mr. S.M. Abdullah is to set up a rule of Muslim majority in Kashmir and in order to achieve this aim he has always been trying to get some

support from outside. First of all he sought the support and guidance of the Qadianies, who are deemed to be the agents of the Britishers. He then turned his attention to the Kashmir Committee of Lahore and Muslim League and later on to Ahrars. Feeling now that these Muslim organisations could not, in the changed circumstances brought about by the Government [of India] Act of 1935, effectively uphold his mission, he wanted to give a national tinge to his communal activities. With this aim in view he proposed to change the name of his communal organization in March 1938. His proposal met with opposition in the open session of the Conference and he had to postpone its consideration to the next year. It is interesting to know that soon after the representatives of the Muslim Conference in the Legislative Assembly of the State (the very representatives who are now posing as nationalists and have affixed their signatures to the so-called national demand) moved a resolution in the Assembly to the effect that recruitment of all other communities be stopped altogether till such time as the Muslim percentage of 76 in services is made up. A reference is invited to printed pages 46 to 54 of the printed report dated 30th March 1938 and pages 32-35 dated 31st of March 1938 of the debates of Praja Sabha.

5. During the year 1938 the Muslim Conference or its leaders including Mr. S.M. Abdullah did not undergo any change in their outlook, ideology or activities, to justify the inference that their intention to change the creed and the policy of the Conference was sincere and genuine. However a resolution by the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference was passed in the summer of 1938 for changing the name of the Conference but this too was only a paper resolution and has not yet been accepted by the Conference. During the summer, Assembly elections were fought by them on communal basis with intensive communal propaganda which furnishes positive proof of their outlook and ideology. Later on the conviction of one Raja Mohd. Akbar Khan of Mirpur for an objectionable and inflammatory speech delivered by him in the last session of Muslim Conference was made an excuse for starting an agitation in August 1938. Some disgruntled non-Muslims, especially those who had failed at the elections (Municipal and Assembly) or had lost confidence of their communities, identified themselves with the Muslim Conference. The number of these non-Muslims, however, does not exceed a dozen. The objective of these non-Muslims was to regain that popularity which they had lost in their own community. The agitation having thus been started, the Government promulgated Section 144 Cr.P.C. and notices under Section 108 Cr.P.C. were served on Mr. S.M. Abdullah and his three colleagues. Up till then Mr. S.M. Abdullah or his Muslim or non-Muslim colleagues did not chalk out any programme of starting a movement on nationalistic basis. He and his colleagues refrained from becoming the members of the Kashmir Congress Committee which has a Muslim President and is composed of both Muslim and non-Muslim members. They defied section 144 Cr.P.C. and were arrested and sentenced to different terms of imprisonment. It was after their arrest that the so-called national demand appeared in the Press. They issued this manifesto with



the sole aim of gaining outside support from the Congress. Their agitation was violent and the car carrying the Prime Minister and two other Ministers of the State was attacked. The police also was pelted with stones. Their slogan was: "May God destroy the seed of Iyengar." This agitation however died within a few days and normal conditions were restored. Recently by-elections for seven Assembly seats took place and these were fought by the Muslim Conference on communal tickets. This is in short the history of Kashmir agitation and the background of the movement which unfortunately is being characterised as a national one while in point of fact it is purely communal and violent.

6. It was in the month of November or December last that the All India States' Peoples' Conference was announced to be held at Ludhiana in February 1939. Expecting that the Kashmir situation [was] likely [to] be discussed by the President in his Address [at] the Conference in its session, it was considered proper to invite the attention of Shriji J. L. Nehru to the statements issued by the minorities respecting nature of the movement and the character of the national demand. Mr. Ganga Ram in his letter dated 22nd December 1938 (leader of the biggest non-official group in Assembly) placed his viewpoint before Shriji J.L. Nehru, who by his letter dated 6.1.39 made further enquiries from him. On the 6th January 1939 the requisite information was supplied to him (copies enclosed). No further enquiry was made which led us to believe that he (Shriji J.L. Nehru) was satisfied or at least was in possession of all the facts which would convince him that the movement was neither national nor non-violent.

7. In numerous statements issued by the representatives of the minorities the Congress was requested to study the situation at close quarters and not to be led by the one-sided version of the sponsors of this agitation. Ordinarily the minority expected that this reasonable request of theirs would be acceded to before the Congress leaders would form their opinion of the character of the movement. Our expectations were falsified by the reference made to Kashmir situation in the Presidential Address of Shriji J.L. Nehru. This Presidential Address is not based on correct statement of facts.

8. "Both are exceedingly backward politically and socially."

It is unfortunate that the state of affairs prevailing in Kashmir at the present moment, both politically and socially, has been described as being similar to that obtaining in Hyderabad. It may be that Hyderabad is extremely backward politically and socially but this remark is not applicable to Kashmir.

In 1934 a representative Assembly on the lines of Minto-Morley Reforms was established in Kashmir, with a non-official majority. The powers of the Assembly were:

- (i) Right of interpellations, moving of resolutions and presentation of Bills.
- (ii) Powers to make regulations for all persons and courts within the State.
- (iii) Right to discuss budget and to move out motions. This Assembly had an effective voice in moulding the policy of the Government. On the motions passed in the House, in spite of Government opposition, Town Area Tax

was reduced and an amendment in the Income-tax Regulation was passed. Possession tax was abolished and many other measures of like nature were adopted at its instance. The scope and powers of this Assembly have now been widened by grant of further constitutional reforms recently on 11th February 1939. We have now an elected majority in the Assembly and we can exercise our vote on the budget demands and taxation also. The appointment of Parliamentary Under-Secretaries out of the non-official members and an elected Deputy Speaker is likely to afford greater opportunities to the representatives of the people to associate with the administration of the State. The Assembly with an elected majority can surely make its voice effective. This form of constitution could not be styled "*as a kind of Legislative Assembly*" as has been done in the Presidential Address and with this constitution Kashmir State could not be brought down to the level of Hyderabad.

- (iv) Unlike Hyderabad no patronage in services is being extended to outsiders, and in 1927 the term "hereditary State subject" was defined in the State and recruitment was confined to the hereditary State subjects only.
- (v) Unlike Hyderabad the criterion of minimum qualifications in Government services was prescribed in the interest of Muslims and special recruitments were made from that community irrespective of merit and seniority; and the wholesome rule of open competition was relaxed altogether in their favour.

9. "Both have the same background of extreme illiteracy, industrial backwardness and undeveloped natural resources"—Shri Nehru.

This remark is also not applicable with equal force to Kashmir. Special scholarships have been provided for Muslims since 1927 to encourage and popularise education among Muslim masses. For this purpose the post of the Special Muslim Inspector has been created and the Education Department has invariably been placed under the control of the Muslim Director of Education and Muslim Ministers. Unlike Hyderabad, a Scholarship Selection Board was set up as early as 1927 and it is significant that out of 184 scholarships for foreign training, 94 were given to Muslims irrespective of their comparative merit with candidates from other communities. Grant for education has been raised considerably and a network of primary and secondary schools has come into being during the last few years. Primary education is free and has been made compulsory in important towns. Secondary education is practically free and nominal tuition fee with numerous exemptions is being charged in the colleges in the interest of Muslims. Grants-in-aid are being given to Muslim schools and Muktabs. A large number of Arabic teachers have been appointed to popularise education among Muslim masses. To crown all, the Wardha Scheme of Adult and Juvenile Education has been introduced in the State with success, which has not as yet been possible to do in the British Indian Provinces under the Congress

Governments. These facts point to the conclusion that so far as the educational conditions obtaining in the two States are concerned, Hyderabad can stand no comparison to Kashmir. Regarding the Industrial activities and development of natural resources, suffice it to say that the All-India Spinners' Association has been given monetary and other facilities for developing indigenous cottage industries and some large-scale industries have also been started. Industrial loans are being given to private individuals and a Regulation to that effect was passed in the Assembly, with a view to afford employment to the under-employed masses. Measures are being taken to invite large numbers of tourists to the State. Agriculturist Relief Regulation, Land Alienation Regulation, Anti-Wad Regulation, and Flood Control Regulation were enacted to improve the lot of the peasantry in the State. The enactment of the Agriculturist Relief Regulation has made it possible for the peasant to pay his debts by easy instalments. "Anti-Wad Regulation was intended to relieve the agriculturist of his undertaking to pay agricultural produce in lieu of advances made at low rates. In consequence of its promulgation agricultural debts amounting to lacs of rupees were settled and peasants were freed from heavy liabilities. This measure does not find a parallel anywhere in British India. Land Alienation Regulation restricted the power of alienation of land by the peasants in Kashmir to one-fourth of his land only, which was intended to save the peasants from being deprived of the means of their livelihood. This Regulation was further amended by the Assembly with a view to exempt agricultural land from attachment in execution of decree. Even the occupancy rights of peasants were exempted from such attachment. No such provision of law has so far been made in the Provinces which are governed by the Congress. In like manner the Shamilat lands were given to the landholders and right to cut royal coniferous trees was given to them free of any charge. Galwand, i.e., land that could escheat to Government was made available to landholders. Kahcharai (grazing) and Abiana taxes were reduced. A network of cooperative societies was established and their number during the last decade has risen to three thousand six hundred from sixteen hundred. Takavi loans and agricultural loans are being given to the peasants and a Regulation for this purpose was passed by the Assembly. Malikana (royalty previously charged by the Government on the lands owned by the agriculturists) was abolished. A Rural Development Department has been constituted for which a considerable provision has been made in the budget. Measures as these are not to be found in Hyderabad and to compare Kashmir State with Hyderabad in these respects was entirely unjustified.

10. "Both are socially backward"—Shri J.L. Nehru.

So far as the amelioration of the social condition of the people of Kashmir is concerned, the people themselves are responsible for the social evils prevailing there and their reform. Under the existing constitution the representatives of different communities possess ample power to introduce and to enact legislation for the purpose of expediting social reform in their respective communities. To hold political conditions solely responsible for social backwardness is therefore far

from being reasonable. We have however some useful pieces of legislation on our statute book such as Early Marriage Prevention Regulation, Suppression of Brothels Regulation, Prevention of Juvenile Smoking Regulation, and Prevention of Female Infanticide among Rajputs, etc., etc., and the Ram Rasm Regulation, and Opening of Public Wells Regulation to Harijans have been introduced in the Assembly, which may very soon come on the statute book.

11. It is thus clear that Hyderabad could not bear comparison to Kashmir from any point of view, be it political, social, educational, or economic, and to call it as backward as Hyderabad would reveal nothing but ignorance of facts.

We have given above a brief history of the Muslim Conference which will show that its activities and ideology have been communal and violent up to present day, and non-Muslims who have joined their movement have not done so on account of being "wise and farseeing". They on their own admission did not represent the communities they belong to and had lost their confidence in their communities. They had reasons to be dissatisfied with their respective communities. The minorities could not support a violent and communal movement and to interpret their attitude as "being opposed to progress" is unjustified and undeserved. The minorities have not been and are not opposed to the desirability of the establishment of form of government in which the people as a whole have an effective voice in the determination and implementation of policy under which the government is to be carried. What particular form such government should finally take in order to suit the local conditions and when and how this ideal will be achieved are questions which deserve dispassionate consideration, which unfortunately has not been given to them in the last session of the All States' Peoples' Conference held at Ludhiana. Unfortunately it has been taken for granted that the present regime gave some privilege to the minorities to which they clung on. It may be that in Hyderabad the minority community enjoys some special privileges, but in Kashmir the case is quite the reverse of it. Here special privileges are being granted to the majority community at the cost of the minorities and the question of clinging on to them by the minorities does not arise at all.

Each case has to be decided on its own merits and to compare Kashmir with a State like Hyderabad, where the elementary civic rights such as freedom of Press, speech and association have not as yet been granted to the people and where the majority community does not possess even the religious liberties is far from being just. We hope that in the light of the facts detailed above the Congress will not lend its support to the movement which has been set afoot by the Muslim Conference in Kashmir and before taking any steps affecting Kashmir, the Congress will allow the minorities which form 24 per cent of the population to represent their case. The resolution passed by the All States' Peoples' Conference regarding Kashmir being passed on misrepresentation of facts and misstatements should carry no weight with them.

## *2. Congress policy on the Hindu-Muslim question*

Although Shri Jinnah's letter leaves little hope of mutual understanding being established between the Muslim League and the Congress, it is necessary, for the sake of Congressmen whether Hindus, Muslims or from any other community, and also for the sake of the millions of non-Congressmen who are allied to no party, who are politically dumb, but whom nevertheless, it is the Congress boast, made good on many occasions, that it seeks to represent that without waiting for a mutual understanding the Congress should state its communal policy in unequivocal terms. For the Congress does not need the spur of neutrality for the sake of doing strict justice without which it cannot exist even for a moment. In brief, then, this is the Congress policy on the communal question, in particular, here the Hindu-Muslim question.

1. Bad as the so-called communal award is, it stands until it is revised by the mutual consent of the parties concerned.

2. In the Provincial Assemblies (barring the Frontier) where the Congress has a majority, the Congress shall have a Muslim member (or members) in the Cabinet chosen from among the largest Muslim group provided that he accepts the Congress programme, both parliamentary and constructive, and loyally abides by the Congress discipline while he remains in the Cabinet.

3. In the distribution of posts, subject to the fulfilment of conditions of merit and efficiency, wherever there is disparity, attempt shall be made to reach the numerical proportion of the Muslims to the Hindus in the respective Provinces. This rule shall apply to all minorities.

4. Wherever a particular community or class is more backward in education than the rest it should be the duty of the Congress to make special provision for the levelling up of its educational standard.

5. In the Provinces where the Congress is in a minority and the Muslims are the majority community, the Congress members shall always remain in opposition. But the opposition shall not be obstructive. It shall examine every act of the Government on its merits and support it wherever it is beneficial in terms of the Congress policy and programme.

6. Where in such Provinces the Muslims are divided in groups the Congress will help that group which from the Congress standpoint is in every way the best.

7. In order to prevent reactionaries from getting control of the administration—subject to the control and guidance of the Working Committee—Congress members in such Provinces may ally themselves with such Muslim group or groups enabling them to form Ministries irrespective of communal representation thereon. Congressmen dare not think in communal terms. Hence they may not cavil at a Ministry composed wholly of Muslims or any other community, the sole test being integrity, ability and robust nationalism according to the Congress ideal.

8. In Parliamentary Muslim elections the Congress should not put up candidates in rivalry with other organisations unless the Congress is satisfied

that the voters themselves desire to be represented by a Congress candidate.

9. The Congress does believe in Muslim mass contact but not in any spirit of hostility towards any Muslim organisation. The contact that the Congress seeks, however, is not necessarily through making Muslims members of the Congress but by serving them in the ways open to the Congress and acceptable to the Muslims. Thus the Congress has been serving thousands of Muslim sisters and brothers through the All-India Spinners' Association organising carding, spinning and weaving among them.

10. Every Congressman represents in his own person the best that is in Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and other faiths. He will, therefore, sympathise with the Hindu horror of cow-slaughter and respect for all creation symbolised through the cow, he will sympathise with the Muslim in his desire for perfect peace in and about a house of worship, and, therefore, his objection to noise in the shape of loud music before mosques at prayer times. These two are taken by way of illustrations inasmuch as they have actually led and still do lead to deadly feuds between the rival communities. But the Congress feels that respect for other faiths cannot be cultivated by forcible means, much less by mass violence. Hence the Congress cannot regard with equanimity attempts on the part of Hindus to prevent cow-slaughter by forcible means, nor Muslims stopping by forcible means music or processions before mosques. These must be matters of mutual adjustment between parties. The general rule, however, should be that custom as to cow-slaughter or processions should be respected and should have the force of law. Where no custom can be proved Muslims should have the freedom to slaughter cows so long as slaughter is not made purely with a view to offend Hindu susceptibility. Similarly, in the absence of custom, Hindus may not play music before mosques during prayer times and loudly at no time. Arti in Hindu temples cannot be interfered with except when it is done so boisterously as wantonly to offend the devotees in neighbouring mosques.

11. As to the Hindi-Urdu controversy the Congress attitude is plain that its official language is Hindustani as commonly spoken in the North by Hindus and Musalmans and written either in the Devanagri or Urdu script. But the Congress is of opinion that both Hindi, i.e. highly Sanskritised Hindustani written in Devanagri, and Urdu, i.e. highly Persianised Hindustāni written in the Urdu script, must be recognised during the transition stage and it is the duty of every educated Congressman to familiarise himself with both the forms of speech and both the scripts.

12. As to the singing of the long-established national song "Bande Mataram", the Congress anticipated what appeared to it to be the stanzas to which no possible exception could be taken on religious or other grounds. But except at purely Congress gatherings it should be left open to individuals whether they will stand up when the stanzas are sung. In the present state of things, in Local Board and Assembly meetings where members are obliged to attend, the singing of "Bande Mataram" should be discontinued.

13. The Congress can have nothing but goodwill towards the Muslim League. It would welcome all Musalmans joining the League and making it a truly democratic national organisation.

3. *Bombay Government's reply to allegations made in the Report of the Inquiry Committee appointed by the Council of the All India Muslim League*

Five and a half pages out of 82 in the Report of the Inquiry Committee appointed by the Council of the All India Muslim League have been devoted to the alleged grievances of Muslims in the Province of Bombay. Most of them are trivial and not worth notice, but as the object appears to be to use these unimportant and usually inaccurate alleged grievances as the basis of an indictment of Government's policy towards the Muslim population generally, it has been decided to reply to them.

The complete irresponsibility of the allegations made and the equally complete failure in many cases to verify easily ascertainable facts is clearly revealed in the first paragraph of the report. Here reference is made to provision in the Assembly that at least 36 members should stand in their seats in support of an adjournment motion in the Bombay Legislative Assembly, and this is made a grievance by the Muslim League against the present Government. Yet no one knows better than the Leader of the Bombay Muslim League Party, for many years the President of the Bombay Legislative Council, that the provision under the old Bombay Legislative Council Rules required that 25 persons in a House of 114 should stand up in support of an adjournment motion. That works out at about one-fifth of the total number of the members of the Legislature. This proportion was maintained in the draft rules framed during the period when Congress Ministry was not in power. But since the present Ministry came into power, a new set of draft rules have been passed which requires only 30 members out of 175 to stand up in their places in support of an adjournment motion to enable the Speaker to allow the motion to be discussed. This works out at about one-sixth the total membership. There are 30 Muslim members, so that if they unite, they can *always* get the requisite number.

The unfairness of this insinuation, apart from its falsity, is shown by the fact that when there was the adjournment motion regarding the Satpati riot sought to be moved by Mr. Mirza Akhtar Hassan, and it was found that only 21 Muslim members of the House had arisen in support of the motion, the Honourable the Home Minister sought the permission of the Speaker to allow the Congress Party members of the House to stand up so that the requisite number of members would be obtained for the motion. Since there was a technical objection against following this method after the count had been taken, the Speaker refused to grant the Home Minister's request.

Reference is made to "many instances" of alleged victimisation of officials

“who refused to be intimidated by the majority and upheld the just rights of the Muslims”. The report actually quotes only two cases, and these are mere inferences from incorrect facts. No Government can publicly discuss the reasons for the transfer of this or that official from one place to another, even when they are everyday matters of departmental convenience. But it can be categorically stated that communal considerations have not in any way influenced Government in transferring officials from one station to another.

The grievance regarding the Government circular to district officials asking them to consult the Presidents of local Congress Committees when making nominations to municipalities and local boards and the allocation of seats on these bodies, was thrashed out on the floor of the Assembly during the last session. It was pointed out that Government had directed Collectors to consult Presidents of District Congress Committees as they had been given to understand that in the past the representatives of the Congress were not consulted at all, while other prominent persons were consulted. This circular was meant to see that Congress Presidents were also consulted. Later when Government came to know that the order had been misconstrued they issued another order cancelling the original one, and directing the Collectors to take into consideration all proposals submitted to them by prominent local leaders irrespective of their political persuasion.

The charge that the Congress Government allowed the Hindus to fence certain land at Rander, though the higher Revenue authorities had rejected the claim of Hindus on that land, is incorrect. The whole of Survey No. 113 of Rander measuring  $7\frac{1}{2}$  acres was assigned as a *khali*. There seemed to be a likelihood of friction between the two communities in 1934 and the then Collector brought about a settlement between the two parties as a result of which only a party of *khali* was assigned to the Idgah. The agreement which was brought about by the Mamlatdar at the suggestion of the then Collector was signed by the leaders of the Muslim community and representatives of the Khedut Association and the document was filed at the Mamlatdar's Office. The Hindus fenced the remaining part of the *khali* according to the agreement arrived at between the parties. Later the Muslims tried to back out of the agreement arrived at. A suit was filed in the Court, and what the present Government did was to see that a compromise was arrived at between the contending parties on the same lines as was arrived at by these parties in the presence of the then Collector. The present Government did not introduce anything new. The order leaves both an approach to the Idgah and room for the parking of carriages and motors of those attending the Idgah unaffected. The 1934 agreement between the Hindus and Mussalmans was signed before the Mamlatdar by leading Mussalmans and agriculturists. The agreement which is filed in the office of the Mamlatdar has been signed by Kaji Shaikh Haji Mia Refai, Ahmed Aref Nakhuda, Mahmud Gulam Ladwa, E.I. Bham, G.H. Ghulam (Mushtaque Randari), and Isap Mahmud Modan on behalf of the Mussalmans, and Gordhanbhai Nathubhai, Kalyanji Lallubhai, Ranchhodbhai Purshotam Patel and Bhikabhai Bhulabhai Patel on behalf of the



Hindus.

The sweeping statement made that the School Boards of the local bodies in the Presidency have issued circulars ordering that the day's work in all schools should begin with the singing of *Bande Mataram* is untrue. Only one specific instance, and that of the School Board of Ahmedabad District, has been cited. The Government has nothing to do with the orders issued by the District School Boards. Under the order, the Muslim boys are left free not to join the singing. Government's policy is to refrain from compelling anyone to sing the song either at school or elsewhere.

Abolition of the system of nomination to local bodies is also made a grievance. Government introduced, early last year, Bills seeking to abolish the system of nominations in all local bodies as being incompatible with the principles of democracy. On this principle the legislative measures had the approval and the support of the Muslims. Shortly afterwards it became necessary for Government to reconstitute the District Local Boards and municipalities and a questionnaire was issued in order to obtain the views of the people. In the light of the opinions received, Government evolved certain uniform criteria on the basis of which it was decided to reconstitute local bodies with an elected membership.

The present Government is of the opinion that it is wrong in principle to allow anybody to claim [any] sort of vested interest in nominated seats; and every community is now given the seats to which it is entitled on the population basis with weightage in the case of a small minority. The grievance made by the Muslim League is based on the assumption that seats should be given to them in reconstituted local bodies, not only on the basis of their local strength, but with the addition of nominated seats which Muslims secured in the past. Nominations were made in the past to restore inequalities in elections. But no such inequality is likely to occur because under separate electorates on the population basis, the possibility of Muslims getting fewer than their strength in a locality simply does not exist and they can therefore never be under-represented. The question of adding nominated seats to those given to them on a population basis does not, therefore, arise. It will be clear from the above that the statement to the effect that Muslim seats have been reduced is without foundation.

The Bombay Municipal Corporation is the only local body in the Province where there is total absence of communal representation and in spite of this Muslims in the past have pulled their electoral weight admirably.

The abolition of nominations from this body and the lowering of the franchise have made it necessary to subdivide the existing wards in suitable areas for the purposes of the elections and care has been taken to see that the Muslim interests do not suffer by an uneven division of their elective strength. What the Honourable the Minister for Local Self-Government said while piloting the City of Bombay Municipal Amending Bill through the Legislature was that he thought that the Muslims would get not less than 18 to 19 seats. This was a mere estimate and it is quite likely that actually the Muslims will get even more seats. In any case, even 18 seats are more than the number to which they are entitled on a population

basis.

The communal representation on the Schools Committee was inconsistent with and repugnant to the scheme of the Bombay City Municipal Act and it was done away with so as to bring the position of this Committee in line with the Standing Committee and Improvements Committee. There is, therefore, no reason to believe that there will not be any Muslim representation on the Schools Committee if the Muslim Councillors utilise their votes properly.

The grant from the Educational Department to the English School at Maklijan, in Ratnagiri District, was made long before the Congress took office. The fact that the school started a Lathi Sangh in 1935 for physical education and affiliated the Sangh to the Hindu Mahasabha at Nagpur and the fact that admission to the Sangh is restricted to Hindu pupils alone, was brought to the notice of the Government sometime before. The question is being examined. If what has been alleged is true, Government will take the necessary action.

There is yet another allegation to the effect that the present Government cancelled the provision in the budget of the Interim Ministry for a grant of scholarships to Muslim students. This statement is false. The Interim Ministry had thought of providing an additional grant of Rs.1,75,000 a year for special scholarships, but the proposed provision was intended for the Backward and Intermediate classes inclusive of Muhammadans and not for Muhammadans alone. It was meant more for the Intermediate and Backward classes than Muhammadans as the latter had been receiving since 1924 a disproportionately large number of scholarships in secondary schools.

The special scholarships for these communities were first sanctioned in 1924. and were being paid to the communities in the following manner:

The total population of the Backward classes according to the 1931 census was 38,81,152 and scholarships of the total value of Rs.17,040 a year were given to Backward class students in primary schools, 87 sets of scholarships at 1 set for every 43,000 of the population in the secondary schools, 21½ sets of scholarships at one set for every 1,75,000 population in the Arts Colleges, 2 scholarships for Engineering, 1 for Commerce, and 3 for Law, were given.

The total population of the Intermediate classes was 1,05,36,967. No scholarships were given for students of these classes in primary schools. 167 sets of scholarships at 1 set for 63,000 of the population were given for students in the secondary schools. 29 sets of scholarships at 1 set for every 3,63,000 out of the population was given for students in Arts Colleges while 5 scholarships were given for Engineering, 2 for Commerce, and 5 for Law.

The total population of Muhammadans was 15,83,259. Scholarships of the total value of Rs.32,232 were given to Mussalman students in the primary schools. 91 sets of scholarships at 1 set for every 17,400 of the population was given for students in the secondary schools. 10½ sets of scholarships at 1 set for every 1,50,000 was given for students in the Arts Colleges, while students studying for Engineering got 3 scholarships, and Commerce 1, and Law 3.

It will be seen from the above figures that Mussalmans have been getting a

considerably larger number of special scholarships on the population basis than the Backward and Intermediate classes. In 1926 the disproportionately large number of scholarships in secondary schools sanctioned for Muhammadans evoked strong comments both in the Legislature and outside. Government, however, did not then consider that the number already sanctioned for Muhammadans should be reduced, but it was of opinion that the number sanctioned for the Intermediate and the Backward classes should be increased so as to put these classes on a level with the Muhammadans. The extra cost on this account was estimated to be over 3 lakhs. But Government had then to postpone the question of increasing the number of scholarships for the Intermediate and Backward classes for want of funds.

On the suggestion of the Interim Ministry to provide an additional amount of Rs.1,75,000 as scholarships for all the three communities mentioned above, the Director of Public Instruction was asked to submit proposals for the utilisation of the amount. The Director proposed additional sets of scholarships for all the three schools and colleges, but in view of the disparity on the population basis referred to above, he proposed a larger number for Backward and Intermediate communities than for the Muhammadans. These proposals, however, still left the Muhammadans in a more favourable position than the other two communities and when the proposals came up before the Interim Ministry for approval they did not accept them and directed that the Director should submit fresh proposals with the object of making fresh allocations in such a way as to ensure the absence of inequality in the treatment of the three communities. In the meantime the Ministry was changed and no action was taken on the proposals.

An examination of the scheme shows that to equalise granting of scholarships to these various communities in order to give them the proportion that they were entitled to without reducing the disproportionately large number of scholarships given to Muslims, would have meant an expenditure of Rs.1,25,000 in addition to the Rs.1,75,000 proposed. It is obvious, therefore, that the Muslims could have received no additional advance from this Rs.1,75,000. On the contrary, the treatment of Muslims strictly in accordance with their rights in relation to other communities would have meant a reduction in the number of scholarships, which the present Government does not desire to make.

Under the headline "Suppression of Urdu Press" the Inquiry Committee refers to alleged action of the Bombay Government against Muslim papers during the communal trouble in March 1938. It is stated that Muslim papers were singled out for demanding securities under section 144, Criminal Procedure Code, and they were ordered to show their riot news to the Commissioner of the Police while no action was taken against papers edited and owned by Hindus. This is untrue.

Out of the six papers against which Government took action under section 144, two were Hindu. The policy of the Government in regard to writings calculated to incite communal hatred was amply made clear by the present Government in their communique of 27th July 1937. The warning contained in

that communique had a very good effect on all the communalist papers excepting the six papers against which Government were forced to take action. The Muslim papers continued to publish news of alleged ill-treatment of Muslims by Hindus in some Province in the North, and in such a way as to make it appear that the incidents had taken place in the Province of Bombay. The communal disturbances of March 1938 were, to a considerable extent, due to these writings. The present Government has not tolerated, and will not tolerate in future, writings which will foment communal hatred, no matter to which community the paper belongs.

The policy of Government in regard to official advertisements and printing work was made clear in a Press Note issued on 28th August 1937. It was then stated that the giving of advertisements and printing work would be entirely guided thereafter by consideration of value received for the money paid. As far as newspapers were concerned circulation among the class of people intended to be reached was to be the primary consideration. That policy still holds good and there is no likelihood of its changing so long as the present Ministry is in power.

Government cannot be held responsible for the fact that "there are very few Muslim papers in the Province and their financial position is not very sound". Even apart from the policy of Government regarding advertisement, it could never be expected to encourage newspapers which day in and day out write to create communal bitterness. There are hundreds of Hindu papers in the Province which do not get advertisements. There are several considerations that guide the authorities who advertise and value obtained is one of the main considerations.

The decision of the Ahmedabad Municipality, on the advice of the Health Officer, closing the burial ground known as the Pir Kamal's Qabarstan, is also another grievance mentioned in the Report of the Committee. The Municipality passed the resolution in the interest of public health of the citizens. Ahmedabad is a growing city and it is already congested and has some slums. The area in which the Qabarstan is situated is included in the Ellis Bridge Town Planning Scheme. It appears that the Municipality, finding that any further use of this burial ground is bound to cause harm to the neighbouring residents, passed the above resolution. It could not be stated that the motive behind such a resolution was anti-Muslim. There have been instances in the past where such burial grounds have been closed and new grounds provided for burial purposes. The closing down of the Qabarstan had been viewed all through from the point of view of the health of the city and had no communal or political bearing till very recently, when a communal colour was sought to be given to it by interested parties. Government however has not taken any decision in the matter and has asked the Director of Public Health to visit the place, and after careful inspection, advise Government in the matter.

An amazing allegation that is made in the report is that several Muslim students at Chiloda (Ahmedabad District) who were exempted from paying school fees in June 1937, were denied exemption after the communal tension in

the locality during the month of September 1937. This allegation about the exemption of fees is published under a caption "Scholarships suspended". There are no scholarships at the disposal of the Schools Committee and it can only recommend pupils for free studentships. A scrutiny of the records of the school in question shows that all the Muslim boys studying in the school up to November 1937 were granted free studentships on the recommendation of the members of the Village School Committee. It appears that later Muslim students did not attend this school and had migrated to Dholka.

There are five paragraphs in the Report dealing with communal riots in the Province of Bombay. It has been insinuated that the present Government sided with the Hindus. It is unnecessary to go into the details of the causes and the course of these various riots, because Government is unwilling, by raking up old history, to re-open old wounds and start fresh controversies. It only desires to state that these riots were dealt with by the local officers in a strictly impartial manner with a view only to restoring law and order.

There is also an allegation in the Report that Government was responsible for breaking agreements existing between the two communities. This charge is imaginary. On the contrary, District Officials have been directed strictly to adhere to the terms of decrees, awards and agreements regulating the rights of the two communities. Wherever possible the communities have been persuaded to come together and adjust their claims by agreement as in the famous Sonya Maruti case in Poona.

Government regrets that the Muslim League should have raised a fabric of allegation on such vaguely stated facts, none of which can bear any scrutiny. On the contrary during their eighteen months' regime the present Government in Bombay have with reference to the Muslims taken among others the following steps:

(1) After the present Ministry took office steps were taken by Government to bring about reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims in certain places in the Province and with that object in view Government sanctioned the release of four Muslim prisoners convicted in the Ahmedabad-Viramgam riot of 1919. One Muslim prisoner convicted in communal riot in Sholapur in 1927 was released. Two Muslim prisoners convicted in the communal riot in Surat in 1928 and 15 Muslim prisoners convicted in the communal riot at Poona in 1936 over the Sonya Maruti Temple dispute were ordered to be released. In November 1938, Government sanctioned the withdrawal of five criminal cases against several Hindus and Muslims which had arisen out of the communal disturbances at Nadiad during Muharram in March 1938.

(2) Government have passed orders that three Masjids in Ahmednagar should be restored to the Mussalmans of the place.

(3) Arrangements have been made at the Cama and Albless Hospitals, Bombay, for the training of Muslim women as nurses. 5 Muslim candidates have been entertained this year, 4 in general nursing and 1 in midwifery courses.

(4) Since the present Government took office 2 Muslims have already been appointed as Sub-Judges and one more Muslim's name is borne on the current

select list of candidates for appointment as Subordinate Judges, thus giving to the community more than the quota usually given to it.

(5) Since the advent of the present Ministry 5 Muslims have been appointed either as Government Pleaders or Public Prosecutors or their Assistants.

(6) 16 Muslims have been appointed as Honorary Magistrates.

(7) Muslim members have been appointed on the Visiting Committees for the two Bombay City Jails and other institutions such as the Children's Aid Society, the David Sassoon Industrial School and the Willingdon Boys' Home.

(8) The percentage of places reserved in Government High Schools for the Muhammadan students has been raised from 15 to 20.

(9) Without reference to the Grant-in-aid Code rules a liberal grant of Rs. 6,000 non-recurrent and Rs. 5,500 recurrent has been given to a Muhammadan Purdah Girls' School in Bombay as a special case.

(10) In response to the Muhammadan public feeling in Poona a Muhammadan lady was promoted from the Subordinate service to gazetted rank and appointed Lady Superintendent of the Urdu Training College for Women, Poona.

(11) Mrs. Faiz Tyebji, M.L.A., was requested to visit the Anglo-Urdu Girls' Middle School, Poona, which is the only institution for Urdu-speaking girls in the Province and to make recommendations for popularising it, and, in accordance with her suggestion, the Middle School is to be removed to a more suitable rented building and converted into a full-fledged High School from next year at an additional annual cost of about Rs. 6,000. Steps are also being taken to give effect to her other recommendations in the matter.

(12) Additional special scholarships of the value of Rs. 9,360 in secondary schools and of Rs. 7,200 in colleges have been sanctioned for Muhammadan girls with effect from the current year (1938-39).

The total population of the Province of Bombay according to the last census was about 1,82,00,000, and the population of Mussalmans was about 16,00,000. The percentage of recruitment of Muslims to Government service on the population basis should be 8.8. On the 1st of July 1937, the percentage of Mussalmans in the Provincial Service was 8.6. The statistics of appointments held by Muhammadans in the Provincial Service on the 1st July 1938 show that the percentage had increased to 9.6. These figures show that Muhammadans have secured a percentage higher than they would be entitled to on a strictly population basis. The figures also reveal the noticeable fact that the percentage of Muhammadans in the Provincial Service has increased by 1 per cent in one year.

#### 4. Representation from Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind

The Secretary, Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind, invites the opinion of the Working Committee and also reflects where necessary on some of the Resolutions passed

at its annual session held at Delhi in March last.

(1) Cultural autonomy: The Provincial Governments to draft a Bill for the protection of the Islamic personal law and to that end devise a suitable machinery. This will be in pursuance of the declarations of the Congress to protect the personal law of Islam (pages 7, 9, 10).

(2) Resolution No. 8 outlines the General Policy of the Jamiat (page 10).

(3) Wardha Scheme of Education: The scheme as explained by Dr. Zakir Husain in his report is open to the following objections:

Inculcation of equal respect for all religions is inimical to the teachings of Islam. Tolerance is one thing and equal respect for all religions is another. One may not therefore be confused with the other.

Whole-hearted acceptance of the doctrine of non-violence which the scheme implies is un-Islamic. Mussalmans have accepted non-violence for political reasons and not as a part of their religious faith. Nothing should be done to make it appear that the use of violence is, in all circumstances, illegitimate.

To bring the scheme into greater conformity with the teachings of Islam the following further amendments are suggested:

(1) Co-education to be prohibited.

(2) No compulsory education for girls after the age of 12.

(3) No music and painting (of animate objects) for Muslim boys and girls.

(4) Muslim boys to be exempted from compulsory education if they are learning and memorising the Quran.

There is no provision for religious education in the curriculum. Care should also be taken to see that the girls and boys have prescribed for them separate courses of studies suited to their genius and aptitudes.

##### 5. *Sayyed Ali Muhummed H. Rashdi, Secretary, Sind Provincial Moslem League, on Sind Ministry and Congress*

The summary of Mr. Nihehaldass's interview appearing in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, of July 1926, is an important document, revealing the latest trend of Sind politics. It indicates that all is not well again with the Sind Ministry and that once again attempts are to be made to secure Congress cooperation on the grounds that the present Sind Ministry is full of nationalist elements, that its achievements fully entitle it to the Congress support, and that in case the Congress did not take advantage of K.B. Allahbaksh's "still-existing nationalistic attitude" the communal forces now dormant will revive and in due course of time overwhelm the whole of India. Let us examine these arguments in the light of the conditions really obtaining in Sind.

### WHY HAS THE MINISTRY BECOME CONGRESS-MINDED?

Why is it, I ask, that the Ministry has come to feel that it must now place itself under the Congress protection? What new developments have taken place there that have made it so impatient for assuming, this time, the Congress cooperation? The Moslem League in Sind, according to Mr. Nihchaldass, has been leading a precarious existence and he has also refused to admit that the Ministry is now weaker than before. What are then the circumstances which have prompted them to court Congress cooperation at this stage?

### DISILLUSIONMENT AND DISAPPOINTMENT

Those who know Sind conditions intimately are aware of the real reasons responsible for the Ministry's latest drift towards the Congress. They will agree with me when I say that it is not an outcome of any honest inner urge of nationalism, but it is a sequel to the disillusionment of the opportunists and deserters from the other Parties whose cooperation the Ministry had temporarily secured by holding out extravagant and irredeemable promises to them, in order to escape its difficulties of January last, and who have by now done to the Ministers' stomachs what only a rough sea voyage could have done to them. I am supported in this view by Mr. Nihchaldass's own Secretary, Mr. Gordon, I.S.E., who while on leave in England is reported in the Press to have recently said, on the eve of the annual Sind dinner, that the Sind Ministry existed chiefly on catering to the personal needs of individuals. I wish Mr. Nihchaldass had not omitted this basic point while speaking on Sind affairs, which really explains the reason for this sudden outburst of love and liking for the Congress.

### WILL CONGRESS BE JUSTIFIED?

Another question which ought to be carefully considered in this connection is whether the Sind Ministry, during the 18 months of its existence, has done anything which should justify the Congress to take it up under its own protection, if the Congress really does not like to do, by hook or crook, a little more of monkeying with the Moslem Provinces by throwing to the winds even its own principles and programme.

### THEIR ANTECEDENTS

Let us first look into the antecedents of the Hon'ble the head of the present Ministry himself. He was elected to the Assembly as a member of the United Party. When the United Party could not get any office, he joined the then Ministerial Party and when depending on his support Sir Ghulam Hussain ignored his Hindu followers and brought a crisis on himself he jilted Sir Ghulam one hour before the latter's fate was to be decided, and became Premier himself.



Within four months' time he gave a go-by to old friends of the United Party also and laid the foundation of a government having no ostensible programme, principles or party. Shortly afterwards, when there was a storm over the assessment question he began flirting with the Congress and when his overtures evoked no satisfactory response from the Congress, excepting adoption by the latter of an attitude of passive neutrality, he came to Mr. Jinnah and expressed his desire in writing to join the Muslim League if only his Premiership was guaranteed. However, when no such guarantee came forth from the League quarters he began distributing the crumbs of office among those who were prepared to betray their Parties, and after a ceaseless effort of 8 months, during which time no Assembly session was called, he succeeded in gathering around him the requisite number of Members, each one of whom had his own tale of greed and betrayal to tell. And, as was expected, now that the Premier has exhausted all his resources to keep those wild cats tied by their tails any longer he is once again active to replace them with some new victims of his nationalistic fervour and extravagant promises. It will further be of interest to note that during the last six months twice attempts have been made by the Premier to coalesce with the League on certain conditions but he has always met with a refusal from there.

With regard to Sir Ghulam Hussain, who is now "second in command", it should, I think, suffice to say that within the last 30 months, he has made and unmade, joined and resigned from, no less than half-a-dozen political Parties—to name a few, the United Party, the Moslem Political Party, the Democratic Party, the Democratic Coalition Party, the Moslem League Party, and the Allahbaksh Party.

#### MR. PATEL'S RECENT STATEMENT

Will any honourable, honest, or responsible Party having any claim to constitutional morality ever allow itself to be lured in by a Ministry composed of such elements? Mr. Patel, the head of the Congress Parliamentary Committee, has issued a statement which, through a curious coincidence, has appeared in the same issue of the *Civil and Military Gazette* in which Mr. Nihchaldass's interview has been published. In that statement Mr. Patel has said: "*The prestige of the Congress inside and outside the country lies in her moral strength. Many self-seeking persons are trying to enter the Congress as she is capturing power. It is time to cleanse the Congress, if the country is not to be polluted.*" Where do K.B. Allahbaksh, O.B.E., and Sir Ghulam Hussain, K.C.S.I., stand in the face of this pronouncement?

#### MINISTRY'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Before I conclude, I think I must also say a few things about the achievements of the present Ministry. Dealing with the same point, even Mr. Nihchaldass

himself has not been able to say anything beyond this that *"there has been an all-round improvement and a change in the mentality of the officials in their dealings with the public. The custom of forced labour had been stopped and illegal gratification with customary sanction was being eradicated."* These are the achievements of his Ministry which entitle it to Congress support! I, however, dispute his statements even on these points. There is no change in the official mentality and it is only during their regime that a certain official had with impunity slapped a Congress office-bearer on his face and had refused permanently to grant interview to a Congress Member of the Sind Assembly. And, when applications were invited by the Ministry directly from people about half-a-lac applications were received within 4 weeks, all complaining of official arrogancy. Corruption and forced labour continue unabated, and on the question of corruption I would refer the readers to the "Assembly debates" for those days when the non-confidence motion had come in for discussion, which contain most damaging and highly scandalous revelations. May I also ask Mr. Nihchaldass by what methods the Ministry has secured the alliance of the "fluid Element? Will it be prepared to face an impartial enquiry committee?

About the general improvements brought about by the present Ministry I can only say that there has been no retrenchment (although the figure of per capita expenditure on administration in Sind is higher than that of any other Province in India excepting Bombay); there have been made more new lucrative appointments; instead of giving relief to agriculturists they have increased assessment rates in defiance of the Congress Party mandates and the well-known resolution of the Karachi session of the Congress; there has been no relief of Agricultural indebtedness; there has been no marked improvement in the existing defective system of irrigation; the stunt of the literacy campaign has proved a failure beyond enabling the Ministers and officials to draw more from the public exchequer in the shape of travelling allowances than what has been contributed from the Provincial finances towards the literacy campaign fund; the antiquated repressive regulations have been allowed to remain on the statute [book] in defiance of public opinion; the hardships of the tenants have increased; and the policy of prohibition has been openly ridiculed in the Assembly.

These, in a nutshell, being the achievements and the past record of the Ministry, it is for the Congress to decide whether it is prepared to throw its lot in with such turn-coat politicians by paying a heavy price which has been stipulated by the Ministers themselves, namely, that in case the present Ministry joined the Congress the latter's old war veterans shall be relegated to the position of pure tuft-hunters in order to make room for the new acquisitions, like Sir Ghulam Hussain and K.B. Allahbaksh. Only a body of unscrupulous and rabid communalists can eat that humble pie.

6. *Copy of a letter alleging discrimination against Muslim Press in Congress-ruled Provinces*

Dear Sir,

You are the Leader of the present-day Congress. Congress you claim to be an honest association. You also say day in and day out that Congress stands for free Press and free speech. By experience we feel this freedom is not to be enjoyed by Mussalmans. On the contrary free expression of view is rigidly denied to Mussalmans. Here is the latest feat of the Congress Cabinet of C.P. in gagging the entire Muslim Press. Seven security orders in one week is record which Dyer and O'Dwyer could never have dreamt. I do not wish to take much of your valuable time, because I know this valuable time could have no claim from Mussalmans but enclose (a) three numbers of *C.P. Times*, (b) order of the Local Government demanding security from *C.P. Times*, (c) copy of the *Hitavada* editorial note, (d) copy of the order against *Muslim* and *National Press*, and along with this I would like to state as follows:

(i) The Press Note of C.P. Government dated 22/6/39 stated that if in future any newspaper writes objectionable communal matters then action will be taken but action in almost all the seven cases were taken on articles written in April and May. An editorial note of *Hitavada* enclosed herein will show you how non-Muslims think of the action of the Ministry.

(ii) The Press Note quoted above clearly laid down that action will only be taken in clause (h), sub-section 1, of section 4 of the Indian Press Emergency Powers Act, 1931. This (h) clause is a communal clause but in the case of *C.P. Times* clause (d) is added with (h) and in the matter of *Muslim*, an Urdu weekly of Nagpur, and *National Press*, Nagpur, security of Rs.1,000 has been demanded exclusively under sedition clauses (b) and (d). These clauses in sub-section 1 of section 4 are non-communal clauses of the Act. Copy of the order against these are enclosed for ready reference.

Pre-Congress Governments were issuing one or two warnings before taking any drastic action of demanding security from the newspapers or presses. Here the case is otherwise. I had an occasion to meet the Divisional Commissioner on 26/6/39, an experienced and very cool-headed I.C.S., who is as well not a Britisher; the meeting was for other reasons and in course of talk we discussed newspapers and the Press Note and if I remember right he expressed his views on *C.P. Times* which he called a strong anti-Ministry paper but decidedly non-communal. He never hinted that security orders are on the way. He was coming straight from Pachmarhi via Khandwa and I presumed that he must be in the knowledge of the Government. Question of warning never arose as late as 26/6/39. I had seen the Deputy Commissioner several times in connection with public matters. I also remember that once he discussed this particular article now complained of as objectionable and said that this [was] a clever piece of writing which cannot come within the purview of the law. He told me that I had

suppressed certain details which I ought to have put to show the other side of the picture. Thus whenever I had occasion to see the local officials who are today accredited to see agents of the Congress Cabinet, I was no doubt told the fury of the Ministers for exposing their sins and guilts but nobody ever told me that the Government would like to warn me for any writing said to be communal.

Here ends the painful story. I do not expect anything tangible from your quarter. I also do not pray for rescinding the orders but I take this opportunity to place before you the sufferings of Mussalmans and the dishonest declarations and contrary actions of the Cabinet. Probably before venturing to praise your Ministers in public in future you may have this point in mind that there is some such place like C.P. where the Ministry is dishonest, one of the Ministers is alleged to be guilty of abduction, and the Ministry as a whole is doing all it can to kill rights of the minority. Because you are responsible for keeping the Ministry in its place, I am sending these papers for your perusal. Please excuse the trouble thus I am giving you.

Yours faithfully,

Enclosed:

- (a) 3 newspapers—*C.P. Times*.\*
- (b) Order of Government re sec. *C.P. Times*.\*
- (c) Copy of the *Hitavada* editorial note.
- (d) Copy of the order against *Muslim* and *National Press*.\*
- (e) Copy of section 4, sub-sec. 1, clauses (b) (d) (h) of the Indian Press Emergency Powers Act, 1931.
- (f) Editorial of *Bombay Chronicle* re warning.

\*Not included.

Copy forwarded to:

- (1) Mr. M.K. Gandhi, Segaon, Wardha.
- (2) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, 19A, Ballygunje Circular Road, Calcutta.
- (3) Mr. S. C. Bose, Ex-President, All India Congress, Woodburn Street, Calcutta.
- (4) Mr. Rajendra Prasad, President, All India Congress, Patna.
- (5) Acharya Kripalani, Secretary, A.I.C.C., Anand Bhavan, Allahabad.
- (6) Mr. V. J. Patel, President, Parliamentary Sub-Committee, All India Congress, Bombay.
- (7) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Anand Bhavan, Allahabad.

*Enclosure 1:*

[Excerpts from the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, 1931 (section 4, sub-section 1, clauses (b) (d) (h), explanations 3-4)]

- (b) Directly or indirectly express approval or administration of any such offence, or of any persons, real or fictitious, who has committed or is alleged or represented to have committed any such offence;
- (d) To bring into hatred or contempt His Majesty or the Government established by law in British India or the administration of justice in British India or any class or section of His Majesty or the said Government; or
- (h) To promote feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects.

*Amendment in Explanations*

*Explanation 3:* Comments expressing disapprobation of the administrative or other action of the Government (or administration) without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection shall not be deemed to be of the nature described in clause (d) or clause (f) of this sub-section.

*Explanation 4:* Words pointing out, without malicious intentions and with an honest view to their removal, matters which are producing or have a tendency to produce feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects shall not be deemed to be words of the nature described in clause (h) of this sub-section.

*Enclosure 2:*

(The *Hitavada* of Nagpur dated 19 July 1939 on security deposits demanded from two Muslim newspapers)

The C.P. Government have demanded securities from two Muslim newspapers in the Province and this has had a disturbing effect on Mussalmans. Mussalmans complain as they did at a meeting held in Nagpur the other day that the Ministry in a Press Note dated June 22 stated that action would be taken only in future against articles likely to create communal discord and that securities have been demanded from the newspapers for articles published long before the Press Note of June 22. If this is really the fact, Muslims have a genuine grievance that Government have not implemented the "Assurance" in the Press Note though this does not justify the motives that they attributed to the Ministry at the meeting. We would advise Government to proceed with circumspection in regard to action against the Press as the action of the kind which they have taken against the Muslim Press has created bitterness which could have been avoided if the Ministry had allowed time to elapse to help newspapers to respond in a proper spirit to the warning contained in the Press Note of June 22.

*Enclosure 3:*

(Editorial in the *Bombay Chronicle* dated 19 June 1939 under the caption "Unjustifiable Severity")

Since under the Press Act Government have to take action themselves, the least that was expected from the Bombay Government in the present case was that they would give at least one warning to the Press. We know of several cases even under the old regime when repeated warnings were given to the printers and publishers before punitive action was taken under the Press Act. Warnings are particularly necessary now because all old laws about disaffection are now more liberally interpreted. The law even against violence needs now to be interpreted somewhat liberally because constitutional agitation being at present more effective than before, people are not easily incited to violence. A special and important reason why the Bombay Government owed a warning is that when March last a deputation of representatives of the Poona Press Owners' Association waited on the Home Minister and pressed their suggestion that in future Government should warn the keeper of the press as also the publisher of the newspaper, he entirely accepted the view and embodied it in a Press Note that was published the next day. Being thus pledged to give at least one warning Government should, in fairness and justice, remit the security that has been paid and content themselves with a warning for the present. If there are any reason why a promised warning was not given, the public should know what they are.

7. *Review by 'An Observer' of the two years in office (completed on 20 July 1939) of the Congress Ministry in Bihar—Increased agrarian unrest and communal tension*

The Congress Ministry in Bihar have been in office now for full two years (the second year was completed on July 20 last) and it is possible to draw certain broad conclusions as regards their work and achievements during this period. I am aware that two years is in some respects too short a period properly to appraise a Government's work, specially that of a Government which succeeded to a regime wholly different in complexion from their own. They had in fact to outlive an inconvenient lagacy and start all over in certain respects. But during these two years they had adequate opportunities of laying the foundations of their policy and to evolve some measures to implement it. The full effects of these measures cannot indeed be appreciated at the moment. But the fruits of those measures which are just making their appearance can serve as an advance index of what the future has in store. It is from this standpoint that I intend to evaluate the Bihar Congress Ministry's work and draw some conclusions from it.

There is little doubt about it that the Congress Ministry assumed office amidst the applause of the general public and amidst good wishes from various sides. Everyone, in fact, welcomed the Congress Ministers, not only because they are

Congressmen but also because they are the first responsible and popular Ministry to take office under the new Constitution and because they assumed their position by virtue of the fact that they were returned in an overwhelming majority in the elections. It may be recalled here that when the Congress High Command was engaged in negotiations with the Governor-General to secure an assurance about the non-use of their extraordinary powers by the Governors, there was support from many quarters to the Congress viewpoint, because it was felt that the decision of the Congress Party to accept responsibility of office after ploughing the sands of negation for well-nigh two decades should not be vitiated by the overhanging shadow of frequent conflicts with Governors, which the use of reserve powers by them might have involved. This observation I make just to illustrate the extent of the popular interest in the Congress Party's decision to accept office.

#### TENANCY LEGISLATION

The first measure of importance that the Congress Government proposed was the amendment of the tenancy legislation. A drastic Bill to amend the Bihar Tenancy Act was formulated, which aimed at reducing the prevailing rates of rents, at taking away the landlords' rights to recover arrears of rents from the tenants, at giving occupancy and other rights to the tenants which they had not got before, and so on. Some of these changes in the land tenure of the Province were absolutely necessary since they were intended to remove some long-standing anomalies in the tenancy legislation and to afford the tenants security of tenure. But some others were too drastic and were calculated positively to cut at the capacity of the landlords to realise rents. I do not like to enter into a detailed examination here of the various measures of tenancy legislation and their provisions. Suffice it to say that there was intensive agitation by the zamindars against the draft Tenancy Amendment Bill, in consequence of which the Congress Government agreed to enter into negotiations with the zamindars on the question. A Congress-zamindar agreement was evolved as a result thereof, and formed the basis of the various tenancy measures (there are altogether four of them) subsequently adopted by the Bihar Legislature.

#### INCREASED AGRARIAN UNREST

The Congress-zamindar compromise, however, was not the end of the trouble. In the course of the administration of the tenancy laws, especially the Reduction of Arrears of Rent Act and the Bakhasht Lands Restoration Act, the scales are being weighed very much against the zamindars. The latter are being harassed and put to difficulties in a variety of ways by the vagaries of the Government rent reduction officers on the one hand and by the growing hostility of the tenants on the other. The consequence is that so far as the zamindars are concerned, or rather so far as the general agrarian problem is concerned, the Bihar Congress Government's legislative activity had not produced that satisfaction or

contentment which it was expected it would do. There is now greater discontent, greater trouble in the villages and greater friction between the landlords and the tenants than ever before. The zamindars have either been ruined or are on the way to ruin; that will be the consequence of the tenancy measures even the Ministers themselves admit. All the same the tenants have not been benefited or satisfied to any extent. What is worse, law and order are at a great discount in Bihar today and further deterioration in that regard is not only a possibility but also a probability.

### THE MINORITY COMMUNITY

The Congress Ministry's regime was expected to result in the contentment and satisfaction of the minority communities. But actually the advent of the Congress regime was signalised by—in fact synchronised with—a wave of dissatisfaction among the Muslim community. I do not lay the blame for this development entirely on the shoulders of the Congress Ministry. They have been the victims of a mendacious propaganda carried on by certain sections of the Muslims, specially those belonging to the Muslim League party. The grounds for Muslim discontent are not properly verifiable; but there is no doubt about it that their feelings have been worked up by vague charges persistently made of Congress disregard of Muslim interests. The result is that during the last two years Hindu-Muslim riots have broken out at more than one place in the Province, notably at Gaya and Bhagalpore and many innocent lives were lost. Muslim feelings of dissatisfaction against the Congress Government of Bihar could possibly have been assuaged by an earnest attempt to settle the points of difference, whatever they are, by the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League discussing them across the table. But so far the initial move in this direction had not been made by either party. Muslims, therefore, continue to nurse their unexpressed grievances; the communal tension remains at a high pitch; and the danger of outbreaks of communal rioting at some place or other in the Province at some time or other continues as an imminent possibility.

### BENGALI-BIHARI PROBLEM

The Congress Ministry's advent to power has led to the emergence of another movement of protest which threatens to disrupt the territorial integrity of the Bihar Province. I refer to the movement for the separation of the Chhotanagpur division from Bihar proper. This movement is an indirect offshoot of the Bengali-Bihari problem, which assumed such big dimensions recently that the Congress Working Committee had to take cognisance of it and appointed Dr. Rajendra Prasad to enquire and make a report on it. His report has since been made to the Working Committee, but so far no action has been taken to give effect to its recommendations by the Congress Ministry. While that matter has been hanging fire, Bengali discontent found a method of ventilating itself by the encouragement it provided to the movement in Chhotanagpur, in certain parts of



which Bengali influence predominates, for the constitution of that division into a separate Province on the ground that the interests of the inhabitants of that area (the Adibasis) are not being adequately safeguarded and protected by the Congress Ministry. This movement has been growing in size and proportion recently. It cannot indeed be asserted that the separation move has any strong legs to stand upon. It is merely an engineered move by a few disgruntled Adibasis backed, as I have said, by certain disgruntled sections of Bengalis in Chhotanagpur and to a certain extent by the Christian Missionary elements, whose activities have wide ramifications in that area. The Bihar Ministry have openly set themselves against the move for separation, while maintaining that they are prepared to do everything for the amelioration of the conditions of the Adibasis. But, once started, such movements tend to persist and the leaders endeavour to feed it and keep it alive by propagating the convenient cry that the Bihar Ministry are sacrificing Adibasi interests and denying them their due share in the administration of the Province and in the public service.

#### THE OUTLOOK

I have so far shown how during their two years' tenure of office the Congress Government in Bihar have stimulated forces of discontent and opposition on more than one front. The full impact of these oppositionist factors is beginning to be felt just now; but there is every possibility of their gathering momentum in the years to come. For instance, the agrarian discontent shows definite signs of aggravation and the tenants will in that case get more and more strained. This will have an essentially adverse effect on the position of law and order in the Province. Similarly, whatever solution the Congress Government may evolve for the communal trouble, the mischief-mongers will continue to foment discontent among the Muslim masses, so that Hindus and Muslims instead of coming together will drift farther and farther apart. The Adibasi agitation is at present only a ripple on the surface of Chhotanagpur; but unless there is a strong counter-movement to minimise the mischief of the separationist agitators, these latter will continue to remain thorns in the side of the Ministry and will give them no peace.

#### AMELIORATIVE MEASURES

Having said all that I have said above, I will be unfair to the Ministry if I allow the impression to be left on the minds of the readers that they have only stimulated forces of opposition and discontent and have not done anything good and advantageous for the people. I will refer, therefore, to two or three measures undertaken by them which, if they are successfully implemented and the rate of progress in them is maintained, are calculated to ameliorate the condition of the masses of the people. When I mention two or three items of the Congress activity, I have in mind the mass literacy movement organised by the Hon. Dr. Mahmud, which in the course of one year has made considerable progress and resulted in

about 6 lakhs of hitherto illiterate adults becoming literate, and the electrification project, which is still in an embryonic stage but to which the Congress Government stand definitely committed. The latter scheme is expected to cost about Rs. 2½ to Rs. 3 crores and when completed will not only make cheap power available for the working of a number of small as well as big industries in the Province but will also remove the immense difficulties now experienced by the agriculturists in respect of water supply for irrigational purposes. The mass literacy movement and the electrification project between them inhere vast potentialities for the improvement of the moral and material welfare of the people of Bihar and it is hoped that the Congress Government will spare no pains to make them a success.

### PROHIBITION

In addition to these measures the Congress Government in Bihar, in company with other Congress Governments, introduced complete prohibition in Saran district and intend gradually to extend its scope to other districts in the Province. This has inevitably resulted in considerable loss of revenue, which is proposed to be made good by resort to fresh taxation. In any case the moral basis on which the prohibition experiment is founded cannot be disputed and if only the Congress Governments do not proceed at breakneck speed in introducing prohibition, things will adjust themselves in a few years.

Two other important legislative measures for which the Congress Governments have made themselves responsible are the Money-lenders' Act and the Sugar Factories Control Act. The Bihar Money-lenders' Act, like the prohibition experiment, is not an unmixed evil; it has been productive of some good to the debtors but perhaps more good has been done by it to the dishonest ones of this class, while it has hit some of the creditors rather hard. Its full effects are not yet visible but reports are trickling through that credit is becoming gradually restricted in the countryside and that when coupled with the very sad condition of the cooperative movement in Bihar, it is likely to prove a source of great hardship to the agriculturists in the long run if some suitable alternative sources of credit are not made available to them. The Ministry contemplate legislation for debt conciliation and rehabilitation of the cooperative movement which, if passed, might serve to retrieve the position to a certain extent.

The sugar control legislation too is unfortunately proving a one-sided affair in practice. It was intended to improve the position of the cane growers as well as of factory owners, but in its actual working it is turning out to be a source of disadvantage to the factory owners, while the sugarcane grower is being hampered by the fixation of high minimum prices for cane.

Besides these the Ministry have appointed a Retrenchment Committee, an Educational Reorganisation Committee, a Labour Committee, some of which have made their reports and others, notably the Educational Reorganisation Committee and the Labour Committee, have still to do so. It is quite possible that

the recommendations of the last two bodies will enable the Government to evolve sound policies in regard to the educational system and labour welfare.

#### MORE DISCONTENT AND UNREST

The main features of the work of the Bihar Congress Ministry, briefly reviewed above, tell their own tale. It is not my intention to judge the Ministry harshly; but it is a confession that I cannot help making that two years after their assumption of office, there is more discontent and unrest in the Province than previously. I give the Congress Government credit for good intentions and for some good acts too. But they had got to satisfy so many interests within and without the party to which they belong that their good intentions are not always capable of being translated into fruitful actions. Even now there is a greater danger of the Ministry being brought into disrepute and their work proving a failure on account of the internal dissensions within the Congress party than by the attacks of any external agency. If, at least, in the future, the Ministry can take a strong attitude and keep the forces of this disruption and disorder under check, they can retrieve to a great extent the position they have lost so far. There are occasional complaints that the European element in the services has not yet completely reconciled itself to the new order and is inclined to interpose spokes in the Ministry's wheels. But it is not possible to verify them. While everyone will be glad if the first popular Government of the Province are able to show a good and satisfactory record of useful public activity at the end of their present term of office, many will be sorry if through some reason or other they prove a failure. The greater will be the regret of these latter sections of public opinion if the work of the Ministry is suddenly terminated at the call of the High Command for some extraneous reasons unconnected with the Province. This kind of danger, as everyone knows, is not altogether remote.

8. *Congress Working Committee Resolution, dated 11 August 1939, declaring Subhas Chandra Bose disqualified as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for three years with effect from August 1939*

The Working Committee has given the most anxious consideration to the action of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the erstwhile President of the National Congress, in connection with two resolutions of the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. known as 'Satyagraha in Provinces' and 'Congress Ministries and the P.C.C.s'. The Working Committee has also considered the long letter of Shri Subhas Babu,\* appended hereto. The Working Committee with great sorrow and reluctance has come to the conclusion that Subhas Babu has wholly missed the main point raised by the President of the Congress as clearly set forth in his declaration,\* also appended hereto. As ex-President he should have also

realised that after having received peremptory instructions from the President it was his clear duty as a servant of the nation to obey them implicitly even though he differed from the ruling of the President. It was open to him, if he felt aggrieved by the ruling, to appeal to the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. But he was bound, so long as the President's instructions stood, to carry them out faithfully. This is the first condition of the proper functioning of any organisation, much more so of a vast organisation like the National Congress, which is engaged in a life and death struggle with the best organised and most powerful imperialistic corporation in the world. If what seems to be Subhas Babu's contention in his letter, that every member is free to interpret the Congress Constitution as he likes, prevails, there will be perfect anarchy in the Congress and it must break to pieces in no time.

The Working Committee has come to the painful conclusion that it will fail in its duty if it condones the deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline by Subhas Babu. The Working Committee therefore resolves that for his grave act of indiscipline Shri Subhas Babu is declared disqualified as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for three years as from August 1939. The Working Committee trusts that Shri Subhas Babu will see the error of his ways and loyally submit to this disciplinary action.

The Working Committee has taken note of the indiscipline of many other Congressmen including responsible officials. But it has refrained from taking any action as the members acted under the inspiration of Shri Subhas Babu. The Working Committee, however, leaves it open to Provincial organisations to take action if they think it necessary for the proper observance of discipline and especially if the offending members do not express regret for their indiscipline.

The Committee further empowers the President to take disciplinary action against such members who, instead of expressing regret by their speech or conduct for the indiscipline, persist in it.

\*Not included.

9. *An open letter to the Congress High Command on the plight of Hindus under Congress rule in the districts of Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan in the N.W.F.P.*

Bannu

19 August 1939

Dear Sir,

I shall be obliged if you will kindly publish the letter given below for the good of the minorities in the Frontier Province and particularly in the districts of Bannu and D.I. Khan.

Yours sincerely,  
Tek Chand, B.A.  
Secretary

City Defence Committee, Bannu

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND

Dear Sirs,

As staunch believers in universal brotherhood and sincere lovers of peace and humanity we crave your kind permission to address you this brief letter in token of sympathies with our suffering co-religionists who are in infinitesimal minority in this part of the country and are undergoing untold and indescribable sufferings during the regime of Congress Ministry since it has come into power and taken law and order in its hands.

We need not say that we have taken this liberty with you because at the time of the last elections for Assembly the voters were clearly told by the Congress candidates and their supporters that they would have an option to place their grievances before your august body for redress in case of troubles and the rights and privileges of the minorities would be guarded and looked after in a befitting manner.

We think you all know how we as well as our womenfolk and children are being kidnapped to the mountain [fortresses] by the tribes from across the border, in active connivance with the bad characters of the villages in these two districts of Bannu and D.I. Khan, kept in the caves there, cruelly tortured and held out to the relatives for ransom money. This kind of communal raiding and kidnapping has become so common and order of the day and the insecurity of life and property and lawlessness have become so abnormal in these two districts that for the minorities it is nothing short of a reign of terror and it is not without running a serious risk to move to or from the villages. We were labouring under a misconception that with the advent of the popular Government in the Frontier Province the millennium and Ramraj will come for us according to the election pledges held out to us by the Congress candidates. But we are disillusioned when we see this deplorable state of affairs prevailing in the nook and corner of the districts where our poor and miserable brethren and co-religionists are hunted down and are kidnapped to the tribal territory and not a hand is raised for their protection.

The poor villagers are gradually but sorrowfully migrating from the villages to the towns under most discouraging circumstances and gloomy aspects of living, but there also they cannot find immunity from the common danger. In July 1938 our town of Bannu with a big wall round it and at a stone's throw from the Cantonment, with an adjoining police line, police station in the heart of the city, police guards on the gates and police reserve, was raided by a big lashkar where they played havoc with the lives and property of the citizens by setting fire to 26 rich cloth and other shops involving a loss of 3 lacs of rupees and killing six Hindus and wounding nine more and had left the city leaving only five killed and nine wounded by the residents. The gate of the city from which the lashkar had entered at about 9.15 p.m. had remained open till 5 a.m. next day. The military and police help had reached after the Lashkar had gone away out of the city from the same gate from which they had entered. This tragic and unprecedented event

in the history of our town is not only a black spot on the fair name of our popular Government but has given a great shock to her prestige also. During all this time we had approached the provincial authorities, had also made representations to the Congress President and some of the prominent members and had waited upon Mahatma Gandhi himself on the historic occasion of his visit to our town in October last and had placed our grievances before him in the shape of a statement concerning this knotty and difficult question but we regret to say that his reply was extremely disappointing. Our deputation had met Mr. Asaf Ali of Delhi also when he had come here probably in compliance with the wishes of your Parliamentary Sub-Committee and we had placed our views before him but it is a pity that his report is still in the womb of mystery.

Our D. I. Khan brethren and friends had held a Provincial Conference at D. I. Khan and had raised their united voice from the platform for the relief from these raids and kidnappings but we are simply sorry to say that no relief has come to them also from any quarter so far

The conditions in the districts of Bannu and D. I. Khan are as bad as before and instead of improving have gone from bad to worse day by day and now the matters have come to such a pass that the minorities are panic-stricken and are at a loss what to do and where to go. Recently rumours had spread that our town was again going to be attacked by a lashkar and consequently a deputation of the prominent citizens had waited upon the Deputy Commissioner to kindly have military guard detailed for the protection of the city as last year but no military guard has come till now. The citizens on account of the fear of the attack cannot sleep and keep vigil for the whole night. What is the use of spending crores of rupees on the military in India if it cannot be utilised for the protection of the civil population of the minority from the hands of dacoits from the tribal territory in a district like Bannu lying on the border of that territory?

Whatever the reasons of the dacoities, raids and kidnappings may be, whether these may be due to the change of Provincial Government, the weak administration of the popular Government, the peaceful penetration or Forward Policy, as it is also called, of the British Government, the general awakening in India, the economic and political conditions of the tribes as well as their criminal tendencies, the peculiar geographical conditions of our district and the [fleeing] of the outlaws from these districts to the tribal territory after committing murders and finding safe refuge there, the abolition of section XXII of the F.C.R. and the institution of Malik Tappa and taking away the ancestral Jagirs and rewards of the Maliks and Reisis by the Congress Ministry and thus losing their sympathies, it cannot be doubted in the least that the responsibility of these raids, insecurity of life and property, disturbance and lawlessness in these districts lies on the shoulders of the Congress Ministry which has failed to maintain law and order and give protection to the minorities of the districts of Bannu and D. I. Khan.

We therefore approach you in the name of humanity, in the name of God, in the name of the greatest national organisation in India to come to our relief in compliance with election manifestos and pledges in the hour of our distress and

trouble and save us from extinction or leave us at the mercy of the British Government if you cannot have the administration of the Congress Ministry carried on in the true sense of the word. It cannot be doubted that it is a Muslim Province and consequently the Muslims must have predominance over the Hindus in services. But no minority in any Province in India can tolerate the state of affairs which is existing in the districts of Bannu and D. I. Khan in these days. I wonder how you could keep mum over a question of such significance. We are fully conscious that we have got majority at our back in India. May we appeal to them also in the name of Hindu culture and religion to realise their duty which they owe to us and extend their helping hands to their distressed brethren and co-religionists in this part of the country.

Yours faithfully,  
Tek Chand, B.A.

Secretary  
City Defence Committee  
Bannu

Typed copy of the signatories is appended for the convenience of the Press:

1. Tek Chand, Secretary,  
City Defence Committee, Bannu
2. Milawa Ram Kalia, Pleader
3. Khushi Ram Mallick, B.Sc., M.B.B.S.
4. Aya Ram Bhatia
5. Hukam Chand Kantror
6. Lok Nath, President,  
Arya Samaj, Bannu
7. Parsot Lal
8. Daulat Ram, M.B.B.S.
9. Ram Chand, S.A.S.
10. Jiwan Singh, President,  
Gwin Singh Sabha
11. Tehl Ram Ailawadi
12. Sunder Singh, Bookseller
13. Harnam Das Gandhi, Secretary,  
Seva Samiti, Bannu

10. *Statement issued by Mahatma Gandhi on 5 September 1939, after his interview with the Viceroy*

At Delhi, as I was entraining for Kalka, a big crowd sang, in perfect good humour, to the worn-out refrain of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai'. 'We don't want any

understanding'. I had then my weekly silence. Therefore I merely smiled. And those who were standing on the footboard returned the smile with their smile, whilst they were admonishing me not to have any understanding with the Viceroy. I had also a letter from a Congress Committee giving me similar warning. Neither of these counsellors knew me. I did not need the warning to know my limitations. Apart from the Delhi demonstration and a Congress Committee's warning, it is my duty to tell the public what happened at the interview with H.E. the Viceroy.

I knew that I had no instructions whatsoever from the Working Committee in the matter. I had answered a telegraphic invitation and taken the first train I could catch. And what is more, with my irrepressible and out-and-out non-violence, I knew that I could not represent the national mind and I should cut a sorry figure if I tried to do so. I told His Excellency as much. Therefore there could be no question of any understanding, or negotiation with me. Nor, I saw, had he sent for me to negotiate. I have returned from the Viceregal Lodge empty handed and without any understanding, open or secret. If there is to be any, it would be between the Congress and the Government.

Having, therefore, made my position vis-à-vis the Congress quite clear, I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint. I told him that I could not contemplate, without being stirred to the very depth, the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before him the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart I am in perpetual quarrel with God that he should allow such things to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes at the end of the daily quarrel that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men. I must try on without losing faith even though I may break in the attempt.

And so, as though in anticipation of the agony that was awaiting me, I sent on July 23 from Abbottabad the following letter to Herr Hitler:

Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success?

Anyway, I anticipate your forgiveness if I have erred in writing to you.

How I wish that even now he would listen to reason and the appeal from almost the whole of thinking mankind, not excluding the German people



themselves. I must refuse to believe that Germans contemplate with equanimity the evacuation of big cities like London for fear of destruction to be wrought by man's inhuman ingenuity. They cannot contemplate with equanimity such destruction of themselves and their own monuments. I am not therefore just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled?

Yet it almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force and, as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else. It is in the midst of this catastrophe without parallel that Congressmen and all other responsible Indians individually and collectively have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama.

II. *Statement issued by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on September 14, 1939, in regard to the War Crisis and India*

Wardha

14 September 1939

The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilised behaviour. It has seen in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government

in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it.

The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use India's resources, for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If cooperation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Cooperation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic state in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-18, the declared war aims were preservation of democracy, self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very Governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that Treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent States.

Subsequently history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain democracy was in peril and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it.

Again it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them.

If the war is to defend the 'status quo', imperialist possessions, colonies, vested

interests and privileges, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and Imperialism and Fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own Constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a reorganisation of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganisation. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

The Working Committee have noted that many Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must take their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination or any evidence

that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any cooperation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere.

In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future.

War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during recent years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities, cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of Fascism and Imperialism are removed. To that end the Working Committee are prepared to give their cooperation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people

over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the peoples of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world.

*12. Appointment by the Congress Working Committee of a Sub-Committee to deal with questions in connection with the war situation*

Wardha  
September 1939

In view of the situation arising out of the European war and the statement thereon issued by the Working Committee, the Committee hereby appoint a Sub-Committee consisting of Shris Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman), Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sri Vallabhbhai Patel to deal with the questions in connection with the situation.

*13. Statement issued by Mahatma Gandhi on 15 September 1939 on the Congress Working Committee's statement on world crisis*

The Working Committee's statement on the world crisis took four days before it received final shape. Every member expressed his opinion freely on the draft that was, at the Committee's invitation, prepared by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally. This could only be done on a purely non-violent basis. But the Committee had a tremendous responsibility to discharge. It could not take the purely non-violent spirit requisite for the possession of the strength which disdains to take advantage of the difficulty of the opponent. But in stating the reasons for its conclusion the Committee desired to show the greatest consideration for the English.

The author of the statement is an artist. Though he cannot be surpassed in his implacable opposition to Imperialism in any shape or form, he is a friend of the English people. Indeed he is more English than Indian in his thoughts and make-up. He is often more at home with Englishmen than with his own countrymen. And he is a humanitarian in the sense that he reacts to every wrong, no matter where perpetrated. Though, therefore, he is an ardent nationalist his nationalism is enriched by his fine internationalism. Hence the statement is a manifesto addressed not only to his own countrymen, not only to the British

Government and the British people, but it is addressed also to the nations of the world including those that are exploited like India. He has compelled India through the Working Committee, to think not merely of her own freedom, but of the freedom of all the exploited nations of the world.

The same time that the Committee passed the statement it appointed a Board of his choice with himself as Chairman to deal with the situation as it may develop from time to time.

I hope that the statement will receive the unanimous support of all the parties among Congressmen. The strongest among them will not find any lack of strength in it. And at this supreme hour in the history of the nation the Congress should believe that there will be no lack of strength in action, if action becomes necessary. It will be a pity if Congressmen engage in petty squabbles and party strife. If anything big or worthy is to come out of the Committee's action, the undivided and unquestioned loyalty of every Congressman is absolutely necessary. I hope, too, that all other political parties and all communities will join the Committee's demand for a clear declaration of their policy from the British Government with such corresponding action as is possible amidst martial conditions. Recognition of India, and for that matter of all those who are under the British Crown, as free and independent nations seems to me to be the natural corollary of British professions about democracy. If the war means anything less, the cooperation of dependent nations can never be honestly voluntary, unless it were based on non-violence.

All that is required is a mental revolution on the part of British statesmen. To put it still more plainly, all that is required is honest action to implement the declaration of faith in democracy made on the eve of the war, and still being repeated from British platforms. Will Great Britain have an unwilling India dragged into the war or a willing ally cooperating with her in the prosecution of a defence of true democracy? The Congress support will mean the greatest moral asset in favour of England and France. For the Congress has no soldiers to offer. The Congress fights not with violent but with non-violent means, however imperfect, however crude the non-violence may be.

14. *Circular dated 16 September 1939 issued by the War Sub-Committee of the Congress Working Committee to all Provincial Congress Committees*

Dear Comrades,

For many years past all of us have lived on the verge of a world crisis and preoccupied as we were with our vital national problems, the Congress has often given thought to the approaching crisis and laid down our broad policy in regard to it. Now that crisis has come and war rages in Europe, in addition to the Far Eastern War, which has now been going on for two and a half years. Every Congressman has been deeply moved by this turn of events and has given earnest

consideration to our duty at this juncture. Not only the directions of the Congress, its reason for existence compel us to play a worthy and effective part in the development of events. We have not been onlookers of the events in India passively adapting ourselves to what has happened. The Congress has essentially been a body of action and struggle in the cause of India's freedom and has shaped India's destiny for many years. That grave responsibility has to be shouldered afresh by the Congress in this crisis, which affects India as well as the rest of the world. As you are aware, the Working Committee have given the most earnest consideration to these developments and have issued a statement in which they have clearly laid down India's attitude. We invite your attention to this statement so that your provincial and local committees and all Congressmen should appreciate the position fully and act in accordance with the advice given. That statement is a dispassionately worded document, clarifying the issues as they affect India in simple language and indicating the road that India has to travel in these troubled times. The implications of that statement and the possible developments must be clear to you.

The Committee have viewed the crisis in the widest perspective and considered the cause of Indian freedom in relation to world freedom. We, who claim to labour for great ends in India cannot lose sight of these perspectives. This crisis will not pass, as the Working Committee say, leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. The world is going to be refashioned and India is going to play her part in this refashioning. Many questions arise as to our day-to-day activities, more especially during this period when our final decision has not been taken. We shall endeavour to answer them as they are put to us. As you are aware, a special Sub-Committee consisting of us three has been appointed to deal with the war emergency and we shall always be at your disposal for reference or advice. Our Sub-Committee will, of course, be guided by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress President, Shri Rajendra Prasad.

Two matters, however, have to be borne in mind, for they are of essential importance. Whatever the developments might be, we can only face them with dignity and strength if our organisation is well prepared and has put an end to internal controversy and conflict. No lover of the Congress and of Indian freedom may do anything which impairs our unity and joint will for action. We have all to rise above our petty selves and become, in this crisis of our destiny, true soldiers of India, speaking and acting together, with dignity and forbearance and in accordance with the ideals and principles we have cherished. Our first duty is to tone up our organisation and keep it in a fit condition for whatever demands might be made upon it. Secondly, we must not individually or severally act or speak hastily, precipitating a development before its proper time. We must function in accordance with the spirit of the Working Committee's statement and not overreach it or belie it in our words or deeds. That would be a disservice to the larger cause we seek to serve, as well as to this unity, which is essential in our ranks.

Your provincial and local committees should give the widest publicity to the

Working Committee's statement, and explain its implications, more particularly the essential need for the tightening up of our organisation and preparing it for all difficulties and trials we may have to face. Unity and discipline have to be emphasised as well as that the final decision has not been taken yet and this will depend on circumstances and developments. Our position has been frankly and clearly stated before India and the world; to that we shall adhere and seek, above all, to follow the paths which lead to world freedom and reorganisation, which must be based on our freedom. But any action taken by an individual Congressman, which goes beyond the Working Committee's statement, will not only lead to a loosening of our discipline but to a weakening of our cause and to controversy when we have to present a united front. This has to be avoided. Strength will not come to us by individual action or by brave speeches but by discipline and united effort. The hour of trial has come again upon us. Let us be worthy of it.

15. *Copy of a letter\* from George S. Arundale on the British Prime Minister Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons.*

Adyar

21 September 1939

Sir,

I most earnestly hope that Mr. Chamberlain has been grossly misreported when he is declared to have said in the House of Commons yesterday that "Britain's general purpose in the struggle was to redeem Europe from the perpetual recurrence of German aggression and to enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and liberties."

If such a statement be correct, then I can only say that it is the most unwise utterance any individual in a responsible position could possibly make, and it only confirms me in my personal certainty that our present Prime Minister is unfit to represent the British people, and still more unfit to represent the British Empire.

Mr. Chamberlain desires to localise the war and to make it the concern of no country except Britain, and presumably France, and of no other peoples than the peoples of Europe.

If so, why should India concern herself about a European war? And why should any country outside Europe in the least degree care about a war which is declared by the Prime Minister of Britain to be a European affair? If this be true, India will be well advised to stay out of the war, as also all other countries which are remote from Europe. It may be true that India is part of the British Empire, but there is little encouragement to her to participate in the war in any way, if it be, as Mr. Chamberlain asserts, only a war to give Europe independence and liberty.



16. *Statement by the President of the All India Congress Committee, dated Wardha, the 28th September 1939, on charges made by T.J. Kedar and eleven other Congress members of the C.P. and Berar Legislative Assembly against D.P. Misra, Minister, Government of C.P. and Berar.*

On the 4th April 1939, Mr. T.J. Kedar and eleven other members of the C.P. and Berar Legislative Assembly belonging to the Congress Party made a representation to Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose, President of the Congress, containing serious allegations against Sjt. D.P. Misra, Minister. Before he could dispose of the matter Sjt. Bose resigned and it came up before the Working Committee in August 1939, when Sjt. Bhulabhai Desai was deputed to hold an inquiry. The complainants withdrew from the inquiry soon after Sjt. Bhulabhai Desai had commenced it and have asked me to appoint a gentleman of the status of a High Court Judge to investigate.

The charges which have been made are of two categories and relate to the period prior to and while Dr. Khare was Prime Minister and to Pandit Shukla's period of Premiership. The former relating to Dr. Khare's period are of a serious nature and the latter of Pandit Shukla's period relate to administrative acts and omissions in regard to which no specific allegation of corruption or moral turpitude is made. It is necessary to bear this distinction in mind. If the former are withdrawn or considered to be unreasonable and otherwise untenable, it will be unnecessary to institute an inquiry into the latter category of charges making allegations of delay in disposing of business or challenging propriety of orders considered wrong by the complainants, without any specific allegation of corruption. It would thus appear that the nature of the first class of charges, the circumstances that have led to them and the way in which they have been dealt with from time to time should be considered in detail.

The first group of charges relates to what may be described as the Hasina affair in which one Nana Naidu, the driver of Sjt. Misra, was involved and to certain commissions which Nana Naidu is alleged to have received on the purchase of Dodge cars for Sjt. Misra, the Minister, at Government expense.

The Hasina affair is as follows:

In May 1937 some two months before Congress Ministry was formed a complaint was made to the police of Jubbulpore by the mother of a girl named Hasina to the effect that she had been abducted by one Nana Naidu who was the driver of Sjt. D.P. Misra. The complaint was made a fortnight after the day of the disappearance of the girl. The girl was subsequently found and Naidu who had been absconding also surrendered before the police. There was a strong rumour that Sjt. D.P. Misra would be implicated in the case and it was generally believed, particularly by Congressmen among whom Dr. Khare and Mr. Kedar, the principal complainant, and Sjt. R.S. Shukla, who was in those days opposed politically to Sjt. Misra, are included, that Sjt. Misra was innocent and that some persons, some of them highly placed, were trying to implicate him for political reasons. The investigation proceeded and ultimately the Deputy Commissioner

Mr. W.V. Grigson recorded an order under sec. 173 Cr.P.C. on the 10th July 1939. After considering at length all the evidence available including police records and diaries and after consultation with the Superintendent of Police and other officials concerned and in full concurrence with them he came to the conclusion that "There is clearly nothing therefore to be done but to close the investigation and discharge the arrested accused, Hardeo and Nana Naidu. Mr. Misra was never arrested as the police had never felt that there was a case against him strong enough to justify his arrest." That there was no foundation for the charge that the girl had been abducted by force or fraud and raped, has been demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt by the subsequent conduct of the girl Hasina who has since then got converted to Hinduism, married Nana Naidu, and has been living with him as his wife.

Not only was the ending of the investigation accepted as a fair closing of the case by everybody concerned including the girl and her mother, the complainant, but also by Sir Hyde Gowan, the Governor of the Province, who appointed Sjt. Misra as a Minister, and by Dr. Khare and the members of the Assembly who all welcomed Sjt. D.P. Misra as a Minister in spite of the attempt that had been made to implicate him. The complainants themselves state in their petition as follows:

The investigation started during the regime of the Interim Ministry at the head of which stood Dr. Raghavendra Rao who is a bitter opponent of Mr. D.P. Misra. The Province at the first flush believed that it was an inspired case and sympathy went to Mr. D.P. Misra from many quarters. Even Dr. Khare shared this sympathy.

They have not however given any reasons to show that the sympathy was misplaced nor have they mentioned anything that has happened since, which has altered the feeling in the Province. But one thing has happened and is now public property. Sjt. Misra has had the misfortune of having parted company with Dr. Khare and thus lost the sympathy of his whilom friend, Dr. Khare, and Dr. Khare's friends and sympathisers.

While the investigation had been proceeding Sjt. Misra had adopted a most honourable attitude and written to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Congress President, tendering his resignation from all positions in the Congress organisation so long as he had not cleared his character. Soon after the investigation terminated, he became a Minister and not a whisper was heard about the case or his character so long as his relations with Dr. Khare and his friends, the present complainants, remained friendly. It may be noted that shortly after the termination of the proceedings the girl was converted to Hinduism and married to Naidu and both began to live in the servants' quarters of Mr. Misra's house evidently with the approval and certainly without any objection on the part of not only Sjt. Misra but also of Dr. Khare and all his colleagues. On the present occasion, too, Sjt. Misra has followed the same course

and offered to resign if it was felt that the case called for his resignation.

Early in 1938 differences arose between Dr. Khare on one side and some of his colleagues in the Ministry on the other. Sjt. D.P. Misra, who had been Dr. Khare's supporter and without whose support Dr. Khare would not have been elected the Leader of the Congress Party and become the first Prime Minister under the new constitution, for reasons which it is unnecessary to go into, was found in the camp opposed to Dr. Khare. Charges and countercharges were made and became the subject of investigation by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at Pachmarhi. A compromise was patched up but proved ineffective in bridging the gulf. The events that followed resulted in the dismissal of Sriyukts Shukla, Misra and Mehta from the Ministry by the Governor at the instance of Dr. Khare, the appointment of a new Ministry with Dr. Khare as Premier and excluding Sjts. Shukla, Misra and Mehta, the resignation of the new Ministry at the instance of the Congress Working Committee, and the formation of a new Ministry with Sjt. Shukla as Premier and Sjt. D.P. Misra as one of the Ministers. At the time when this question was under discussion one of the demands, persistently and insistentlly put forward on behalf of the party supporting Dr. Khare which comprises the present complainants, was that Sjt. Misra should be excluded from the new Ministry. The Working Committee, finding that there was no foundation for excluding Sjt. Misra, did not accede to the suggestion. There was much writing in the Press at the time against Sjt. Misra and that section of the Press which supports Dr. Khare had never excused Sjt. Misra for the attitude he took against Dr. Khare, nor have the supporters of Dr. Khare.

Nothing was heard about the Hasina affair even in those days of great stress and strain in the political relations of the groups in the C.P. and Berar Assembly, nor for about 5 months thereafter up to the month of December 1938.

One Subramanyam who had nothing to do with the Hasina case or even with the Province, some seventeen months after the order of Mr. Grigson terminating the proceedings, applied to the High Court on 19th December 1938 for revision of Mr. Grigson's order. The application was summarily dismissed. He subsequently applied to the Sessions Judge of Jubbulpore on 31st January 1939 for reopening the case. The application was based upon photographic copies of the police diary of the case. Facsimile copies of some portions of the police diaries were published on the 12th January 1939 by the *Sanket* newspaper. On the same day Sjt. Udhoji, one of the present complainants, applied to the Working Committee for the removal of Sjt. Misra from ministership. A question which arose at the outset was as to how these photographic copies were obtained and where the original was, as they had not been and indeed could not have been obtained regularly in the ordinary course of business and it was suspected that they had been obtained by theft of the records of the case. When the matter came up before Mr. K.G. Digby, the Sessions Judge of Jubbulpore, on the 23rd February 1939, he rejected the petition *in limine* on the ground amongst others that "much of the data given in the application appears to have only been made available to the applicants owing to theft by unknown people of confidential

Hasina affair was not one of the incidents to be investigated. And yet the very first witness examined by them came to depose that Sir Hyde Gowan had said that "he was up against a difficulty and that in view of the fact that Mr. Misra was going to be included in the new Cabinet the proceedings must be dropped". They say that it [is] not a charge that the termination of the proceedings was brought about corruptly and in the same breath they say it was done at the instance of the Governor for political reasons, and thus charge Sir Hyde Gowan, who is now dead, with being party to suppressing criminal proceedings which might have resulted in five years' imprisonment for Sjt. Misra so that the Governor might appoint him as a Minister. In the memorandum of charges sent to me they do not base any charge on that incident but introduce it in a round about way as an incident on the basis of which inference may be drawn regarding the second charge relating to commission on purchase of cars. If they think that Sjt. Misra is really guilty they should have boldly and unequivocally affirmed it and tried to prove it. If Sjt. Misra is not guilty it is obvious no inference against him can be drawn on the strength of certain false allegations made in a proceeding which was dropped for want of proof and an attempt to reopen which has been rejected *in limine* by judicial courts on the ground that it might be an attempt at blackmail.

The other charge of this period which has been put under three heads relates to certain commissions which Nana Naidu, Sjt. Misra's driver, is alleged to have received on the purchase of Dodge cars which were purchased for the Minister at Government expense.

In September 1937 cars were purchased by the Ministers. A bill was passed by the Assembly permitting the purchase of cars for Ministers. It is said that Naidu obtained a commission of Rs.200 from the dealer of a Dodge car which was purchased for Mr. Misra. This car was damaged in an accident and a second car was purchased from the same dealer and it is alleged that Naidu got a commission of Rs.200 in this transaction also. The complainants further allege that the negotiation for the purchase of the second car was carried on by Naidu behind the back of the Chief Secretary who had already arranged to purchase a Chevrolet car. Mr. Misra is said to have employed Naidu for this negotiation and Nana Naidu is said to have obtained the commission with the knowledge, consent, or wilful connivance of Mr. Misra.

The facts appear to be as follows:

As regards the purchase of the first car it appears that all the Ministers and not Mr. Misra alone had purchased their cars but the bills were submitted to Government. An objection was raised that the cars had not been purchased by the Government and hence could not be paid for by the Government. Dr. Khare, however, passed an order that all the Ministers including himself had purchased cars in pursuance of the salary bill and that the bills should be paid. The bills were paid. It is not alleged that Naidu had anything to do regarding the purchase of the first car and it does not appear why the dealer should pay him any commission. It is worthy of note, however, that Mr. Misra's transaction was the best from the Government point of view. Whereas the other Ministers had got either Ford V8

or Chevrolet cars for prices ranging between Rs.4,073 and Rs.4,144, Mr. Misra had got a Dodge car, which is said to be a costlier car, for Rs.3,990 only. It seems highly improbable that on the top of it the dealer would give a commission of Rs.200 to his driver. In support of this allegation the complainants have offered to produce photographic copy of entries in the dealer's account book. It does not appear how they got the account book to take a photographic copy of some entries in it. If it is at all a correct copy, then the book must have been made available to them by a dismissed servant of the dealer surreptitiously. If the entry is to be found at all in the original and if the copy supplied in their memorandum is at all correct it bears on the face of it signs of fabrication as a close examination of the copy has shown to me. The dealer indignantly repudiated the suggestion that he had paid any commission to Naidu.

After the first car was damaged in an accident a suggestion was made that it should be repaired and while it was under repair a hired car should be provided to the Minister. Dr. Khare, however, ordered that a new car should be purchased as he had himself seen Mr. Misra stuck up more than once in the hired car. It was decided to sell off the damaged car at Rs.1,000 which was considered a fair price by competent persons. A dealer offered to supply a Chevrolet car for Rs.4,000 out of which Rs.1,000 would be set off as price of the damaged car. Sjt. Misra signified his assent to this proposal and the Chief Secretary placed orders for it. Naidu was sent from Pachmarhi where the Ministers and the Chief Secretary were to Nagpur to take back the hired car and to fetch the new car. As is evident from the Secretariat file on the subject, when Naidu was leaving Pachmarhi in course of a conversation the Finance Minister had said that there would be no objection to purchasing a Dodge car if it could be got for the same price as a Chevrolet. The dealer in Dodge cars offered to supply a Dodge for Rs.3,000 plus the damaged car. The Chief Secretary felt that an order had already been placed for Chevrolet and Mr. Misra said that if Dodge could not be got, he would be agreeable to have the Chevrolet. But the dealer in Chevrolet agreed to the cancellation of the order and it was accordingly cancelled with his consent and the Dodge car was purchased. Everybody was pleased at the time and Dr. Khare congratulated Sjt. Misra in writing on his good bargain in securing a costlier car at the same price as a Chevrolet. It is said that Naidu got a commission on this purchase also and a payment of Rs.50 can be definitely proved and that of Rs.150 can be inferred. This again appears unlikely and has been denied by the dealer. There is no suggestion of any direct evidence of Sjt. Misra's knowledge about the payment of commissions to his driver and his knowledge or connivance is sought to be inferred from his intimate relation with Naidu. This intimate relation is sought to be inferred from the Hasina affair, an inquiry into which has been given up. It is noteworthy again that the transaction resulted in no loss to the Government which got a Dodge car at a price which it had agreed to pay for a Chevrolet car. It is highly improbable that the dealer would have paid a commission on this, unless the other dealer had made a heavy profit in the other transactions for Chevrolet. Again, the man who is supposed to have paid the

commission repudiated the charge.

I may also add that the charge relating to the purchase of cars is not a new one and was first made on the 9th July 1938 by Dr. Khare when he had made up his mind to get rid of Sjt. Misra from the Ministry. It was investigated at the time by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and found to be without foundation. In the complaint dated 4th April 1939, this charge was in a sense a secondary one and used to show the intimate relation between Sjt. Misra and Naidu and thus to indicate, if not to prove, the truth of the charge in the Hasina case, which was the primary and the more important charge. The position was altered by the complainants before the Working Committee and Sjt. Bhulabhai Desai and the charge-sheet now submitted takes up the altered position making the Hasina affair only an evidential factor relevant as a proof of the fact that Naidu must have got the commissions with the knowledge, consent, or wilful connivance of Mr. Misra.

Two other matters relating to Naidu have been mentioned, namely, that Sjt. Misra allowed him to remain in his outhouses after his marriage with Hasina and that later on he secured him employment with a gentleman whose application for his estate being taken under the Court of Wards was pending before the Government. The Hasina affair has already been dealt with. In regard to the other matter it has not been suggested why Sjt. Misra should remove Naidu from his own service after having incurred all the blame arising out of the Hasina affair and then go out of his way to secure a job for him with another gentleman. It may be added also that Sjt. Misra had had never to deal with the department of Court of Wards as a Minister.

Thus, to sum up, all the four charges arise in connection with Naidu's alleged receipt of commission on the purchase of cars and Sjt. Misra's connivance at it by reason of his intimate relation with him in the Hasina affair. Now it is not sought to prove, and it has never been alleged, that Sjt. Misra had any hand in securing a termination of the police case and it appears that it was dropped by the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Grigson after considering all the available evidence after about two months of investigation and in consultation with and with the full concurrence of the investigating officers and their superiors including the Superintendent of Police on the ground that there was not sufficient evidence against Naidu and none against Sjt. Misra. The subsequent marriage of Naidu and Hasina and their living together as husband and wife after the conversion of Hasina show that the charge of abduction and rape was without foundation. The decision of the Deputy Commissioner was accepted as fair and absolving all concerned. Subsequent attempt to have the case reopened failed before the High Court and the Session Judge. So far as Sjt. Misra is concerned his innocence was accepted and he was taken as a Minister by the Governor and accepted as a colleague by other members of the Ministry and by others in the Province and that position continued for more than a year until differences arose with Dr. Khare. It is hardly fair to take it up after 2 years on the basis of photographic copies of some stolen confidential police diaries, whose original had been considered by Mr. Grigson before he gave his orders dropping the case, and after

the highest courts of justice have refused to reopen it. It is too much to expect the Congress to reopen the matter in an indirect way as a foundation for, or evidential factor in support of, charge of connivance at an alleged receipt of commission by his driver in connection with purchase of cars. This charge, too, relating to commission, had been investigated at the time when the matter was fresh and had been found to be without foundation. I do not think that in view of these facts the four charges mentioned above, which when analysed can be reduced to one, are such as to call for an inquiry by a person of the status of a judge of a High Court.

The way in which it has been sought to rake them up and the persistence with which they are repeated in one form or another long after the events with which they are concerned and only after the serious differences between Sjt. Misra and Dr. Khare and the reappointment of Sjt. Misra as a Minister despite the insistent demand to exclude him from the Ministry by Dr. Khare's friends show clearly that the request for inquiry is not a bona fide one, especially after the complainants' withdrawal from an inquiry by Sjt. Bhulabhai Desai, and if granted it is likely, in the words of Mr. Digby, to encourage blackmail.

I now deal with the second group of charges relating to administrative matters which are of a comparatively minor importance. Charge 5(a) is of a general character and complains that in making nominations to local bodies Sjt. Misra followed unclean methods. Two specific instances are given relating to nominations to the Nandura and Malkapur Municipalities.

*Nominations to Nandura Municipality:* The complaint is that the Minister nominated Sriyut Radha Krishna Toshnival and Namdeosa Onkarsa Bhansar to the Municipality who should not have been nominated under the rules. The facts are that the Municipality levied a tax on persons carrying on trade in ginning and pressing cotton in 1934, and Sjt. Radha Krishna and another said to be an ancestor of Sjt. Namdeosa were assessed. They challenged the validity of the tax in a Civil Court on the ground that it was illegal and ultra vires and obtained a decree in the first court but the decision was reversed in appeal and a second appeal is pending before the High Court. They did not pay the tax and their application for stay of realisation of the tax pending the appeal was rejected by the High Court. One of them made an application to the Minister for stay and an ad interim stay was granted. The Minister, after hearing from the Municipality and considering the case, vacated his order of stay. These men have been nominated while they are thus in arrears. The practice which has been followed in this Province regarding nominations to local bodies has been to receive recommendations from the Deputy Commissioner and also from the Congress Committee and to consult the members of Legislature from the locality concerned and to make the nominations on the basis of these recommendations and consultations. In this case the Deputy Commissioner sent up five names among which was the name of Sjt. Namdeosa Bhansar. The Congress Committee recommended among others Sjt. Radha Krishna and Sjt. Namdeosa Bhansar. The Government wrote to the Deputy Commissioner to report about the

suitability of Sjt. Radha Krishna. The Deputy Commissioner wrote in highly eulogistic terms about Sjt. Radha Krishna and while pointing out that he had not paid the tax he said further that he had arranged to realise the tax in monthly instalments. The Minister nominated these two men as both the Deputy Commissioner and the Congress Committee were agreed about them. Even if it be supposed that they were in arrears when the validity of the tax itself is in question awaiting adjudication by the High Court, the arrangement made by the Deputy Commissioner for realisation in monthly instalments practically took away the effect of it. The procedure followed in the other case was followed in this case also and I do not see there was anything wrong, particularly in view of the Deputy Commissioner's recommendation.

*Nominations to Malkapur Municipality:* The complaint is that three persons were nominated against the wishes of Berar M.L.A.s and the nominations are not based on any principle. These nominations were also made in accordance with the procedure above indicated and the M.L.A. belonging to the locality was consulted and had at one time approved of the names.

Now even assuming that it was possible to take a different view regarding the suitability of the persons nominated, it is clear that the practice which has been followed in regard to nominations all over the Province has been followed in these cases also and they hardly furnish sufficient, if any, reason at all for an inquiry by a High Court Judge, especially when all that the complainants offer is to produce "evidence of respectable witnesses about rumours generally in connection with nominations".

Charge 5(b) complains about delay in nominations to District Councils of Berar and Charge 5(c) says that when asked by Party members about his refusal to consult Party members Sjt. Misra bluffed the members by using Sardar Patel's name.

Charge 6 says that Sjt. Misra has been amenable to outside influence in exercising his judicial and quasi-judicial functions. Here again no details and no specific instances are given but it is said that respectable witnesses will speak about rumours connected with these cases. Obviously an inquiry cannot be granted to investigate some alleged rumours.

Charge 7 complains about a rule made by him relating to the Nagpur Municipality securing thereby the removal of his alleged opponents from the Municipality. With regard to this charge it is only necessary to state that whatever was done was done by the Cabinet as a whole and not by Sjt. Misra alone and the rule complained of has since been made a part of the law of the land by being incorporated in an Act of the Legislature with the assent of the Governor.

There is no specific allegation or suggestion of any corruption or corrupt practice nor are any instances given. Only alleged rumours are mentioned. Assuming that his action in regard to any or all of these charges was wrong according to the judgement of the complainants, that would hardly be a ground for an investigation. If such administrative action of a Minister could be made the subject of an investigation by a High Court Judge all administration would



become impossible.

I have made an exhaustive study of all the relevant files and other papers and my conclusions are based on them. I do not think there is any justification for an inquiry by a judge. Out of regard for the complainants the Working Committee had appointed Sjt. Bhulabhai Desai to hold an inquiry. In the opinion of the Working Committee Sjt. Bhulabhai Desai fulfilled in every way the condition suggested by the complainants, namely, of being a person of the status of a High Court Judge, and the complainants themselves withdrew from the inquiry without any valid reason. I am accordingly not prepared to accede to their request. On the other hand I am clearly of opinion that the matter should not be allowed to rest here. Responsible members of the Congress Party as the complainants are, they should have understood the implications of their action in persisting in grave criminal charges which had been held by competent persons to be unfounded and accepted by them and all concerned as false, and in resurrecting them after a long lapse of time because they and the Minister concerned had in the meantime come to differ among themselves. It would be impossible for any Ministry to function if it was exposed to attacks from members of its own Party in the way the C.P. Ministry has been and if it has survived these attacks it is in spite of the complainants and because it commands the support of a large majority in the Party and in the Assembly which has not been shaken by the persistent repetition of the charges. They owe an apology to Sjt. Misra which they should offer and failing which the Working Committee should take action against them.

*17. Statement issued by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in connection with the Viceroy's statement issued from New Delhi*

The Viceroy's announcement is disappointing in the extreme but not at all surprising. It is a tragedy that the wave of sympathy and goodwill in favour of Great Britain should have been allowed to dissipate itself, leaving behind once again the jetsam and flotsam of suspicion, distrust and ill-feeling. The Viceroy refers to and confirms past announcements regarding the goal of British policy in India and promises a Round Table Conference at the end of war as a preliminary to a revision of the Government of India Act of 1935. The announcement of 1929 was made immediately before the Lahore Congress which considered it to be so inadequate and unsatisfactory as to justify a change in the Congress creed fixing complete independence of India as the object of the Congress and the launching of the campaign of Civil Disobedience which lasted from 1930 to 1934. Sir Samuel Hoare's statement was made to satisfy people who had insisted on an incorporation of the goal of Dominion Status in the Act of 1935 which the British Government and Parliament had deliberately refused to incorporate in the Act. In spite of these declarations and others the Congress had rejected the Act of

1935. It was not to be hoped that a reiteration of these very announcements which had been rejected without reserve, although they are now made in polite and conciliatory language, would satisfy anyone, and the Viceroy has anticipated the reception which his announcement is likely to get. We have had experience of Round Table Conferences, their interminable discussions, their window-dressing, their representative character and above all their none-too-concealed attempt to take advantage of such differences and deficiencies as exist in this country for most of which the British Government themselves are responsible. There is another important announcement regarding the formation of a consultative group consisting of representatives selected by the Viceroy from amongst a panel nominated by different organisations. Its functions as the name suggests will be consultative. It will have no power to come to decisions and will in effect have no other function than giving moral support to decisions taken by others.

There is no room now left for anyone to doubt that the British policy remains what it has always been that all the talk about democracy and resistance to aggression is not meant to apply to India. Indeed the Prime Minister has declared more than once that the war aim is the protection of freedom of European countries and the establishment of peace in Europe on the basis of status quo. In a war fought for this purpose India can have no interest and a victory for Britain can only imply a continuance of present conditions not only for India but also for all other exploited and suppressed peoples outside Europe. India would be false to her own interests and untrue to the best interests of other suppressed nationalities if she would help imperialism to strengthen itself. It is still open to Britain to rule India without her consent and even to extort material help for conduct of the war. But Great Britain shall not have that spiritual support of India of which the Viceroy has spoken in such eloquent terms. The announcement has effectively destroyed the foundation for any such moral or spiritual support and the war is, as it now appears to everyone to have always been, a war for strengthening Britain's imperial position in her possessions. The much advertised high aims have crumbled into dust at the first touch of reality. The Working Committee of the Congress is going to meet on the 22nd October at Wardha to consider the announcement and to frame its reply to the Viceroy. I hope all Congressmen will await with patience and determination the reply of the Working Committee and conduct themselves with restraint and dignity.

18. *Statement issued by the Standing Committee of the All-India States' People's Conference on 4 October 1939 at Wardha*

#### WAR AND INDIAN STATES

The Standing Committee of the States' Peoples' Conference have met at a time of grave crisis in the world, when war rages in Europe and the people of India

have to take vital decisions of the gravest import to their future. This future will necessarily comprise the States, and even in the present the crisis is having its direct repercussions in the Indian States. The Committee desire to associate themselves fully with the statement issued by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on September 14, 1939 and with the resolution of the All India Congress Committee on the War Crisis passed on 10 October 1939. Believing, as they do, in the unity of India and a common freedom for all the Indian people, they record their deep satisfaction that the Congress has, at this critical juncture, given powerful voice to the demand of the Indian people for democratic freedom. In this freedom to come the people of the States must be equal sharers and they must be prepared to shoulder equal responsibilities.

The immediate cause of this war in Europe was Nazi aggression and the Western allies have proclaimed that they are fighting in the cause of democracy, freedom and self-determination. With these objectives the Standing Committee is in full agreement but it is incumbent that these objectives should be clarified and applied to countries outside Europe and especially to India. The Standing Committee therefore associate themselves with the request made by the National Congress to the British Government for a full and unequivocal statement of Britain's war and peace aims. These aims should be applicable to the people of the Indian States also, who live under an autocratic system which is more reactionary than even the Nazi regime against which Britain is fighting. As the Congress Working Committee has stated, "The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year." To support this system in India is the very negation of democracy and all that Great Britain is said to stand for in the war.

Many of the Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources to Great Britain for the prosecution of the war and have expressed their support to the cause of democracy in Europe. It is incongruous in the extreme that such professions should be made while undiluted autocracy prevails in the States. The Rulers have not in any way sought to consult their people before offering the resources of their States or committing themselves to the war. The Standing Committee, speaking on behalf of the people of the Indian States, cannot accept this commitment, or agree to this continuation of autocracy in the States because war has broken out in Europe.

The Committee notes that the war has already been used for the purpose of introducing new and stringent repressive measures and putting an end to civil liberty in many of the States. In some States, promised reforms in the administration have been deliberately postponed because of the war. A war, ostensibly for democracy, is thus resulting in greater autocracy and repression in the States and in stopping all advance. The people of the States express their strongest protest against this and are wholly unable to give their support to the war under these conditions. They may have to resist impositions forced down upon them.

In the opinion of the Standing Committee the question of introducing democratic institutions in the States is of urgent and vital importance, so that the people of the States might take their proper place in the shaping of a free and independent India and in the new world order to come. The Committee therefore invite the various Rulers to declare that they accept the objective of full responsible government in their States and undertake to give effect to it, in the largest possible measure, in the immediate future. The new repressive legislation should be suspended and civil liberty allowed. India may be legally at war but there are no war conditions anywhere near India and certainly not in the States, which can justify the application of extreme measures of repression.

The Standing Committee desire to make it clear that the Rulers can expect no cooperation from the people unless these fundamental changes are made and the governance of the States is carried on with popular consent and through popular representatives.

The Committee send their greetings to the peoples of many States who are carrying on, with courage and fortitude, their struggle for democratic freedom and civil liberty. This struggle must inevitably become a part of the larger struggle for Indian freedom and for that the people should prepare.

#### 19. *Proceedings of a meeting of the Congress Working Committee held at Wardha from 7 to 11 October 1939*

A meeting of the Working Committee was held from October 7 to 11 at Wardha. Sri Rajendra Prasad presided.

The members present were Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sris Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jamnalal Bajaj, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Jairamdas Doulatram, Bhulabhai Desai, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Bidhan Chandra Roy, Sankarrao Deo, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Harekrushna Mahtab, and J.B. Kripalani.

Sris Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan were present by special invitation. Maulvi Mufti Kifayatullah though invited could not be present owing to reasons of health. Gandhiji was present throughout the sittings of the Working Committee.

#### MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

#### ACCOUNTS

(a) *China Fund*: Resolved that the money spent upon motor ambulance and other equipments as medicine etc. in connection with the China Unit, be written off.

(b) *Spanish Relief Fund*: Resolved that the sum of Rs. 323-5-3 standing to the credit of this account be transferred to the China account.

#### WAR SITUATION

The situation arising out of the European war was discussed and two resolutions dealing with 'War Crisis' and 'Congress and Elections' were adopted to be placed before the meeting of the A.I.C.C. as official resolutions. For the text of the resolutions as they were finally passed by the A.I.C.C. see pages 4, 5, 6.

#### PROVINCIAL CONSTITUTIONS

The constitutions of the Provinces of Gujarat, Kerala, Andhra, Mahakoshal, were placed before the Working Committee and approved.

#### N.W.F.P.

The N.W.F.P.P.C.C. had made a rule that no member of the Congress can form a group inside or outside the Congress or carry on hostile propaganda against it or describe himself by any other name than that of a Khudai Khidmatgar or Congressman. This rule was sent for the sanction of the Working Committee. The Committee gave the following decision in the matter:

"The Working Committee considered the new rule framed by the Frontier P.C.C. recommending the addition of a proviso to Article IV of their constitution. The Committee understand that the object of the proposed amendment is to secure uniformity of policy and practice among Congressmen in the Province and to ensure conformity to discipline. The Committee realise that the Frontier P.C.C. has to face peculiar difficulties in the carrying on of its work in view of the special circumstances prevailing in the Province, and it is necessary to maintain discipline and to prevent disruptive tendencies from developing. Such discipline and unity of effort are all the more necessary because of the grave crisis that confronts the country and which necessitates full preparation for united action.

"The Committee are of opinion that the object aimed at by the proposed amendment can be achieved by the P.C.C. taking disciplinary action against any Congressman who commits a breach of the fundamental policy of the Congress or who deliberately acts in such a way as to bring discredit on the Congress. The P.C.C. has power under the constitution to take such disciplinary action. The proposed amendment to Article IV of the Provincial Constitution will thus be unnecessary.

"The Committee expect all Congressmen in the Province to help Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the acknowledged and unrivalled leader of the Province, in the difficult task that confronts him.

“The organisation of the Khudai Khidmatgars is Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan’s own creation and it has done signal service to the people of the Province under his leadership. In 1931, at Khan Sahab’s suggestion, this organisation of non-violent volunteers became part of the Congress organisation. The Khudai Khidmatgars have ever since then been the volunteer organisation of the Congress in the Frontier Province under the supreme command of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Their function is to serve the public and the Congress cause in the Province, and, if they are to retain their efficiency, they must remain under his command and subject to his discipline. Congressmen in the Frontier Province should not form or associate themselves with any volunteer organisation other than the Khudai Khidmatgars. It is open to the Khudai Khidmatgars to have a pledge for their members in keeping with Congress policy.”

20. *Speech by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at a meeting of the All India Congress Committee held at Wardha from 9 to 10 October 1939*

Dear Friends,

We are meeting here to discuss the situation which has arisen out of the war. The Congress and the All India Congress Committee have from time to time passed resolutions defining the attitude of the Congress towards the war. Those resolutions except the last one were passed at a time when war was apprehended but not actually going on. The latest resolution of the Working Committee which has been issued in the form of [a] manifesto was adopted after declaration of war. You will have seen from that manifesto that we have asked the British Government to declare and define their war aims, with particular reference to India in unequivocal manner. The present war, we are all aware, is being waged by England and France against Germany. The objective which has been declared very often is to free Europe from the constant fear of aggression and generally to secure freedom for all nationalities. We have expressed our detestation of Nazi methods of aggression on many occasions. We have also expressed our sympathy almost in unmistakable terms with all those countries which have from time to time been made the victims of unprovoked attacks by stronger nations.

We protested when Abyssinia was attacked. We expressed our sympathy with the democratic forces in Spain. We protested against the conquest and annexation of Czechoslovakia. We have also expressed our sympathy with the suffering nations. We have thus made our position perfectly clear. What we want is clarification of the position of the allies and particularly of England. We are aware that in the past there had been many occasions when the articulate objects for which a war is fought were not the real objects and even the last Great War which was fought on the slogans of self-determination and making the world safe for democracy could not fulfil any of those high aims. We are, therefore, naturally and inevitably doubtful if the professed aims of the present war are its

real aims. India at the present moment is not an independent country. If it were independent it would have considered whether it should join the present war or not. Many other countries which sympathise with Poland have not joined the war and it is possible that with all our sympathy with Poland and with all our wish to have the cause of democracy, we would have decided in favour of neutrality. With all its implications it is true we have had no experience of those horrible conditions which people have to face when war is carried at [their] doorstep, but we are also having some taste of ordinances which are the first signs of a war particularly in Bengal, in Punjab and in Assam.

We find also that in spite of the fact that we are supposed to have semi-autonomous governments in the Provinces which have necessarily under ordinary circumstances to carry on the demonstration and include in such functions as they may be required upon to fulfil for successful prosecution of the war. The Government of India Act has been amended so as to place powers in the hands of the Central Government and deduct from what little of autonomy there has been in operation in the Provinces. We are therefore anxious to know what part, if any, India is going to play as a free agent in this war. So far she has not been allowed to function as a free agent in any manner whatsoever. Is that to be a foretaste of the democracy that we are going to see established? If India is asked to help in a war for guaranteeing and restoring the freedom of Poland, is it any wonder that India should ask to be made free before she can render any help? It is no question of bargaining or taking the advantage of the difficulties of the adversary. It is a simple and straightforward question that India asks what part or lot can she have in a war waged for the freedom of other countries if she does not have freedom herself, when the very Powers which fight in the name of freedom keep not only India but other countries in their bondage. We want a straight answer to that question and have also said that a mere declaration will not satisfy. We want it to be actually given effect to in the present to the extent it is possible under these conditions. There may be difficulty in actual transformation of the whole system of Government overnight when war is being waged. We are, therefore, not insisting on a full and complete transference of power with all details in [the] matter of administration, but no such considerations apply to a full unequivocal declaration of freedom. We see that there are individual groups, parties and communities in India who have put forward their own claims to be considered. If the British Government and statesmen once make up their mind to deal fairly with India and to give effect to the ideas which they profess in regard to this war it is not difficult for them to evolve a formula that may satisfy all parties and all groups.

They have only to apply their statesmanship, accumulated knowledge and experience, not in finding excuses for not giving back to India her due, but for finding a solution of the difficult problems which face India and I am sure they will be able to evolve a formula.

The Working Committee has asked them earnestly to apply these principles to this problem. I may tell them straightaway that while we do not underrate the

differences which now and then manifest themselves amongst Indians, there is no group, no individual, and no community which does not stand for freedom of the country and for a radical change in the present state of affairs. Such differences as exist can be dissolved by statesmanship if it is used not for accentuating or perpetuating them but for solving them and if the Indian demand is not satisfied no one is going to accept these differences as sufficient excuses on the part of the British Government for denying that freedom which India wants and needs. The Working Committee has put forward these considerations in forceful language in its manifesto. It is a matter of gratification for us that this manifesto has received very great publicity not only in India but in other countries also, and has been commended by liberal-minded persons and Press in many countries. I am told that in the United States it has been broadcast from hundreds of stations on the radio. In England too it has received the support of many of the leaders of public opinion in the Press. All this is quite good. You will have read in the Press that Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and I had interviews with the Viceroy with whom all aspects of the question were discussed at length and I know that the matter is receiving his most earnest consideration. We are naturally anxious for a speedy decision but when matters of great importance are at issue it necessarily takes time to reach decisions and specially when many persons insist upon being consulted and when the decision has to be taken in India not by the Viceroy alone but by the British Government. The communications too have become difficult and irregular on account of the war. Whilst, therefore, I can fully appreciate the impatience at the delay amongst us, I can consider all these circumstances [with] patience as I am sure nothing is going to be lost by it. We have, however, also to remember that we are living in exciting times. Nobody can foretell what the result of this war is going to be. Strange things have happened and by the time we reach the end of it other most unexpected developments will have taken place. Who would have thought before it actually happened that Russia and Germany could join in dividing Poland between themselves? I am not at this moment thinking of the right or wrong of the things or whether Stalin proved in fact to be a shrewder politician or that there has been anything amazing in the nature of surrender of ideals on the part of Nazi Germany or Russia. I am only pointing out the fact that a combination which would have seemed most unexpected, if not impossible, has become a reality. Similarly other strange and unexpected things may happen. What part shall we play in this everchanging drama? We must be prepared for an honourable and effective part at any rate in shaping our own destiny. The task is difficult but with a strong organisation, a determined will and discipline and sacrifice there is nothing that we may not achieve.

The Working Committee is, therefore, going to ask to authorise the War Sub-Committee which is appointed and the Working Committee itself to take such steps as may be called for or as they may deem necessary in this behalf.

I hope you will give it all the support and all the confidence it needs. While we shall be hoping for the best we shall be prepared for the worst.



One word about the business of this meeting. As I have said we have met for a special purpose; our constitution does not provide for special meetings of the A.I.C.C. with a limited Agenda. Many members have sent notices of private resolutions. Some of them are relevant to be questioned and to be considered, others are wholly unconnected with it. Others again may remotely be related to it. I think that considering the importance and the gravity of the subject to be discussed it would be well if we concentrate on that subject alone and do not dissipate our attention on a number of other subjects which, though important themselves, have no connection with the subject which we have met to consider. May I therefore make an appeal to members not to force for consideration of the private resolutions of which we have got as many as 46 on the Agenda paper. If we discuss the one subject of war, the attention not only of this meeting but of the country at large will not be diverted from this all-important issue and it is in the highest interest that it should be concentrated on it.

I shall end with a further request to the members and with a word of apology to the public at large that Wardha is a small place. We have not got any bigger hall than the one in which we are sitting. This month is also not free from rain although today we do not see any signs of it. We, therefore, had to limit this meeting to members and to exclude all the visitors except the Press and even as regards the Press exigencies of accommodation insisted the issue of a very limited number of passes. We also felt that this should be a purely business meeting and not a demonstration meeting. We, therefore, hope that bearing all these considerations in mind, the public will excuse us. They will of course, I hope, get through the Press correct and full report of the proceedings. To the members I desire only to appeal to carry on the discussions with dignity, restraint and moderation. The issues involved are too grave to permit either blue stock or declamation.

21. *Resolution adopted by the Standing Committee of the All-India States' Peoples' Conference at Wardha on 10 October 1939*

#### INDIAN STATES AND THE WORKING COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee resolves that in view of the Ludhiana Resolution of the All India States' Peoples' Conference, in the matter of closer relationship between the Standing Committee and the Working Committee of the Congress, Pandit Jawaharlal and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya be authorised to represent the Standing Committee before the Working Committee of the Congress so that effect might be given to that resolution.

The Ludhiana Resolution referred to is as follows:

"This Conference welcomes the great awakening among the peoples of the States all over India and the progress made by them in their struggle for

responsible government and establishment of civil liberty. It sends its greetings to all those carrying on this struggle and expresses its solidarity with them.

“The Conference further desires to express its appreciation of and its gratitude to the National Congress and its leaders, especially Mahatma Gandhi, for the lead they have given in the struggle of the States’ peoples and for the part they are taking in conducting them. In view of the development of this struggle and the Congress policy in regard to it, the time has come when this struggle should be coordinated with the wider struggle for Indian Independence, of which it is an integral part. Such an integrated all-India struggle must necessarily be carried on under the guidance of the Congress and this Conference gladly pledges its loyal cooperation in it.

“This Conference, therefore, directs and authorises its Working Committee, which in future should be called the Standing Committee, to endeavour by every means to coordinate this struggle in close cooperation with and under the guidance of the National Congress or any sub-committee that the Congress might form for this purpose.”

## *22. Congress Working Committee Resolution on War Preparations adopted at a meeting held in Bombay from 26 to 28 October 1939*

The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the critical international situation and to the danger of war that overhangs the world. In this world crisis the sympathies of the Working Committee are entirely with the people who stand for democracy and freedom, and the Congress has repeatedly condemned Fascist aggression in Europe, Africa and the Far East of Asia as well as the betrayal of democracy by British Imperialism in Czechoslovakia and Spain. The Congress has further clearly enunciated its policy in the event of war and declared its determination to oppose all attempts to impose a war on India. The Committee are bound by this policy of the Congress and will give effect to it so as to prevent the exploitation of Indian resources for imperialist ends. The past policy of the British Government as well as the recent developments demonstrate abundantly that this Government does not stand for freedom and democracy and may at any time betray these ideals. India cannot associate herself with such a Government or be asked to give her resources for democratic freedom which is denied to her and which is likely to be betrayed.

At its meeting held in Calcutta on 1 May 1939, the All India Congress Committee reiterated this policy of the Congress and expressed its disapproval of the despatch of Indian troops to foreign countries. In spite of this clear expression of opinion, the British Government has sent, or is sending, Indian troops to Egypt and Singapore against the declared will of the Indian people. Even apart from the war situation, the Central Legislative Assembly has previously declared that no Indian troops should be sent abroad without the

consent of the Legislature. The British Government has thus flouted the declaration of the Congress and the Assembly and has taken steps which might inevitably lead to India's entanglement in a war. It has further prolonged the life of the Central Assembly by another year. The Working Committee cannot accept these decisions of the British Government and must not only dissociate themselves from them but also take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to the Congress policy. As a first step to this end, the Committee call upon all Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session of the Assembly.

The Committee further remind Provincial Governments to assist in no way the war preparation of the British Government and to keep in mind the policy laid down by the Congress, to which they must adhere. If the carrying out of this policy leads to the resignation or removal of the Congress Ministry they must be prepared for this contingency.

In the event of the war crisis leading to danger to any part of India from the air or otherwise it may be necessary for protective measures to be taken. The Committee will be prepared to encourage such measures if they are within the control of the popular Ministries in the Provinces. The Committee are however not agreeable to such protective measures being used as a cloak for war preparations under the control of the Imperial Government.

### 23. *Rajendra Prasad on Viceroy's statement*

I have read the Viceroy's statement published along with the correspondence that has passed between him and Mr. Jinnah and myself. He seems to give the impression that the British Government is unable to comply with our request for a clear declaration of India's status as a free country on account of our differences. The fact is that the British Government is not prepared to promise that it will accept and give legal effect to any constitution which Indians including all real minorities would prepare and in which safeguards for the protection of minorities will be included. We have made a public demand for such a promise and I cannot understand what objections British Government can have to this on the score of our differences with the minorities. If we are unable to produce a constitution satisfactory to all, the British Government will be free from all blame and the responsibility will be entirely of Indians. The minorities which are really for attaining freedom for India can have no reasonable objection as the proposed constitution will not be produced without the cooperation of all. The real difficulty is not communal but political. The British Government is not yet prepared to concede the right of self-determination to India in practice, however much it may proclaim it in theory to the world. We have put its professions to an acid test. Let us have the right to frame our own constitution and we shall do it. We failed in the past in assisting the British Government to frame a constitution

for us. But helping the British Government to frame a constitution for India is something very different from independently framing a constitution for ourselves with a certainty that the constitution will be accepted and enforced. Our regret is that instead of adopting this straight course and throwing the responsibility upon Indians to frame a constitution with necessary and satisfactory safeguards for the protection of minorities and thus showing its own bona fides beyond doubt and cavil, the British Government has befogged the main and moral issue by asking us to settle our differences without telling us at the same time that the result of such a settlement will be a free constitution for the country. It was for this reason that we felt compelled to concentrate on the political issue and to refuse to consider the proposal for the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council before the question of India's status as [a] free country with full right to self-determination was settled to our satisfaction.

The two principal organisations to which the Viceroy has made reference in his statement, viz., the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League have both declared that they aim at independence for India and so far as I know there is no party or group in India which does not want full powers for India to manage her own affairs by whatever name or expression that freedom may be called or described. There is this fundamental unity in all parties in India and it is this universal urge of all Indians which the Congress has embodied in its demand for a clear declaration.

The resolution of the Muslim League is equally clear that it does not accept the Viceroy's announcement and insists upon the clarification of the same and a consideration *de novo* of the Indian constitutional question. How then does any communal difference stand in the way of a clear recognition and declaration of India's status as a free country? Whatever differences there are, [they] relate not to India's status but to certain other subsidiary matters which we are prepared to settle among ourselves. Our proposed talks with Mr. M.A. Jinnah will relate not to this fundamental position but other subsidiary matters. The Congress has been insisting on 'a constructive programme', an essential element of which, as Mr. Jinnah recognises, is communal unity. We propose to do our best to achieve success in this essential programme but the fact that we are still engaged in this most urgent work should not stand in the way of a clear declaration of the kind demanded by us. All points of principle and details for safeguarding the rights of minorities have to be left out to be settled by Indians themselves which they will do to the satisfaction of all, if once the British Government proves its own bona fides by ceasing to intermeddle in our domestic affairs.

24. *Statement by Rajendra Prasad, issued on 27 October 1939, on Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in the House of Commons*

MAHATMA GANDHI'S STATEMENT REPRESENTS MY REACTION TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE'S SPEECH IN THE COMMONS DEBATE AND IT IS HARDLY NECESSARY FOR

ME TO SAY MUCH MORE STOP BECAUSE WE WERE IN DOUBT WHETHER THE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY WE WERE ASKED TO HELP IN SECURING FOR OTHER COUNTRIES WERE INTENDED FOR US ALSO COMMA WE WANTED A CLEAR DECLARATION OF BRITISH AIMS AND A PRESENT APPLICATION OF THEM STOP WE HAVE BEEN TOLD IN EFFECT THAT WE CANNOT BE PROMISED THAT FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY BECAUSE WE HAVE OUR OWN INTERNAL DIFFERENCES STOP THE PROBLEM OF THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES HAS BEEN BROUGHT OUT AS THE DIFFICULTY IN THE WAY OF INDIA'S ADVANCE TO FREEDOM STOP EYE DO NOT IGNORE OR MINIMISE IT STOP BUT MAY EYE ASK WHEN HAS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OFFERED TO INDIANS THAT IT WILL ACCEPT A CONSTITUTION WHICH INDIANS INCLUDING OF COURSE THE MINORITIES WILL FRAME FOR THEMSELVES STOP LET THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THROW ON INDIANS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PRODUCING AN AGREED CONSTITUTION WITHOUT ANY INTERFERENCE FROM OUTSIDE AND PROMISE TO GIVE STATUTORY EFFECT TO IT WHEN PRODUCED STOP THAT WILL BE A GENUINE OFFER STOP WITHOUT IT ALL TALK OF PROTECTION OF MINORITIES LOOKS LIKE AN EXCUSE FOR PERPETUATING THE STATUS QUO STOP THE MENTION OF EUROPEANS AS A MINORITY RECALLS THE DISCUSSIONS FOR SAFEGUARDING BRITISH INTERESTS STOP INDIANS SHOULD NOT BE BLAMED IF THEY REGARD THE PLEA IN FAVOUR OF MINORITIES AS A SCREEN FOR PROTECTING BRITISH INTERESTS STOP THE CONGRESS INSISTS ON A CHARTER OF INDEPENDENCE TO BE FRAMED BY A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF REPRESENTATIVES SELECTED ON A UNIVERSAL FRANCHISE STOP BUT THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT DOMINION STATUS MAY WELL ASK DASH IS THE DOMINION STATUS OF 1926 MENTIONED BY SIR SAMUEL HOARE THE SAME AS OR SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IS PROVIDED BY THE STATUTE OF WESTMINSTER STOP WHY HAS HE FOUGHT SHY OF MENTIONING THE STATUTE OF WESTMINSTER STOP BEHIND ALL THE CONCILIATORY WORDS OF SIR SAMUEL HOARE THERE IS THE CLEAR INTENTION NOT TO GIVE FULL RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT DASH NOT TO SPEAK OF INDEPENDENCE DASH TO INDIA EVEN AT THE END OF WAR STOP LET THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REALISE THAT INDIA IS NOT TO BE SATISFIED BY A PROMISE OF GRADUAL ADVANCE BY STAGES STOP SHE WANTS FULL FREEDOM AND THE RIGHT TO FRAME HER OWN CONSTITUTION STOP

25. *"The Sind Observer" on Indian Minorities and British Government*

Karachi

28 October 1939

The world is not going to be deceived by making too much of the minorities problem in India either by the Viceroy or the Secretary of State or Sir Samuel Hoare. The minorities are only stalking-horse to deprive the whole country of its birthright of 'Swaraj' and to entrench British vested interests in the name of these minorities. Great Britain has an enormous financial stake in this country. One in four persons in Great Britain is supported from income derived from India. Anything which interferes with this systematic exploitation is a blow struck on the belly of the British people. The latter, therefore, feel that Dominion Status and

fiscal independence for India means starvation at home.

#### AFTER THE WAR

Great Britain is spending untold millions on this war and is arming millions of people for the defence of its islands and the preservation of its empire. After the war is over there will be an enormous piling up of the national debt, unconscionable burdens of taxation, more widespread unemployment after demobilisation takes place, restricted markets for British trade on account of worldwide competition from industrially well organised countries like the United States of America, Germany, Japan, Italy and even India. It means a steep fall in the national income and a heavy rise in the taxation burdens of the people with the consequent social unrest.

#### EMPIRE—A LIVING REALITY

After the war to millions of young Britishers the empire is not merely a splash of colour separated by the seven seas. Having died and bled for this empire, it is to them a living reality. They cannot, therefore, easily allow the non-white and the non-self-governing portions of this empire to be free and independent because they will thereby lose extensive fields of exploitation. To say that after the war the British nation will be in a more liberal mood to consider the claims of India for self-government is wide of the mark. On the contrary, the reverse will be the case inasmuch as a hungry lion will be reluctant to leave its ancient forests or diminish in any way its control and authority over the same.

#### CONGRESS AND COMMUNAL AWARD

It may be recalled that the Congress was no party either to the Communal Award or to the Hoarean reforms of which the award was a part. The Communal Award completely satisfied the minorities on account of which not only did they get communal electorates but also heavy weightages. The European and the Muslim communities were the most favoured. There were as many as fifteen different kinds of electorates to divide the country into so many warring sections. Everything was done by Sir Samuel Hoare and his friends under the Communal Award to convert this country into an electoral bear-garden, make a mockery of democracy, pronounce it a failure in India, and thereby strengthen their hold on this country economically, politically and financially by setting up one community against another.

#### HOARE AND RULES OF THE GAME

What happened? The stage was set by Sir Samuel Hoare. The rules of the game were drawn up by him. The elections of 1937 came off. The Congress had to fight

within the framework of the Constitution laid down by Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Linlithgow. In six Provinces the Congress secured undoubted majorities and two more Provinces were added to it afterwards. In Sind, the Punjab and Bengal there are coalition governments, not Muslim League governments. And the Muslim League can nowhere carry on with a pucca majority of its own like the Congress in the eight Provinces. It was a thundering success for the Congress when millions of voters went to the polls to support it as the defender and the saviour of this country. We say again that all this had happened under the rules of the game prescribed by Sir Samuel Hoare, although he was not himself a sportsman for whom anybody should have any respect.

#### MUSLIMS—A MAJORITY AND MINORITY

Now with regard to the minorities about whom the British politicians are again making much ploy. The Mussalmans are seventy million in this country. They are in a majority as a religious community in at least four Provinces out of eleven. Seventy millions of people, as many as the Germans, with a majority in four Provinces and effective representation in the Central Government and the defence forces, cannot be said to be in a hopeless and despondent condition to require the support of the British Government. These people have large power to assert themselves even under the present Constitution. As they are a majority as well as a minority, all those things that can be made applicable to hopeless minorities are not applicable to Indian Mussalmans.

#### JOINT ELECTORATES AND MINORITIES

If we grant for a moment that the Muslim League has made itself powerless in the Congress Provinces the fault is the League's and not of the Congress. And there are many non-League Mussalmans in the Congress Ministries and the Congress organisations working wholeheartedly with them.

In some of our previous articles we have pointed out how necessary it is for [the] minorities to demand joint electorates for their very protection whether in Sind or in Madras. Minority representatives returned through communal electorates become an isolated depressed class exerting no influence on the course of the Government because they have condemned themselves to that unfortunate position by thinking that communal electorates will be a blessing to them. Experience has shown that contrary is the case. A minority like the Mussalmans ranging from four to fifteen per cent in the Congress Provinces can by their vote influence every election under joint electorates and thereby make all non-Muslim members responsible to themselves and to take care of their interests in the legislature and the government. Communal electorates are not only not a blessing to the minorities but have become a curse.

## BRITISHERS AND MINORITIES

Those who still stick to communal electorates are only playing the British game because the Britishers are such microscopical minority in this country that they cannot exist without communal electorates with heavy weightages for themselves; and in demanding such for themselves they want the support of the other minorities by promising them separate communal electorates in return. The Europeans have received the heaviest possible weightages under the Hoarean Act; and they intrigued with Sir Samuel Hoare to give weightages also to minorities to buttress their claim for the same. The Britishers are thus trying to safeguard themselves in this country by creating, maintaining and accentuating communal differences by every means within their power.

## BRITISH GOVERNMENT OUT OF COUNT

On several occasions the British Government and the Viceroy made it clear that they would not put their hands to any communal settlement in future having had such a sad experience of the Communal Award of 1932. It is for Indians, they said, to modify or abandon the Communal Award by an agreed settlement among themselves. The Communal Award became also part of the Constitution of 1935. The British Government washed its hands clean, never to reopen this communal question unless approached by the communities concerned to modify it in the light of their expressed wishes.

It does not, therefore, lie in the mouth of Sir Samuel Hoare or even the Viceroy now to talk of the minorities. The minorities question is settled by means of the Communal Award and it cannot be reopened by the British Government at the request of any minority or a majority unless they first agree among themselves on any modifications of the award.

To say, therefore, that the minorities question had not been settled by the British Government by means of the Communal Award and that it is still a live issue is to fly in the face of the statements made by the spokesmen of the British Government and the Viceroy. The minorities are being dragged in again and are made much of only to defraud India of its legitimate right of immediate self-government at the Centre.

26. *Extract from the Proceedings of a Meeting of the Congress Coalition Party held at Shillong on 31 October 1939*

Shillong  
31 October 1939

## RESOLUTION

In view of the political crises and the impending resignation of the Congress Coalition Ministry in Assam, the following gentlemen be deputed to



acquaint the Congress High Command with the peculiar conditions of the Province with a view to obtain necessary directions in regard to the time and manner of such resignation and to secure the continuance of the programme of the present Coalition Government:

1. Mr. B.N. Mukherji
2. Mr. Bepin Behari Das
3. The Hon'ble Mr. Ali Haidar Khan
4. Sjt. Bhimbar Deuri
5. Sjt. A.K. Chanda
6. Sjt. N.K. Dutt

G.N. Bardoloi

27. *Viceroy's Broadcast Declaration*

5 November 1939

It is with profound regret that I have to announce that the conversations which, at my instance, had been inaugurated between the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League have so far not achieved what I had hoped. The country is entitled to know, in a matter of such moment and at a time of such gravity, what was the nature of the proposition which I invited my friends in those two organizations to consider. I shall tomorrow publish correspondence which will make the position perfectly clear. Let me only say that my object has been, in these discussions, to bring together the leaders of the great parties and to endeavour to secure, as a result of personal contact between them, and with what personal assistance I could myself give, that measure of agreement in the Provinces which, in their view, would enable them to put forward proposals for a constructive advance at the Centre for the period of the war, such as would be represented by some expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council and by the inclusion in it of political leaders.

My declaration of October 18 contemplated a consultative group. It offered an arrangement relatively so limited as that group only because of marked divergencies of view between the great communities—divergencies the existence of which held out no hope of harmonious working at the Centre on the basis of joint membership of my Executive Council at a time when harmonious working was of first importance. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that that group holds out great possibilities for the future—possibilities, I feel sure, greater than are commonly realized.

I need not say that it is a profound disappointment to me, after so much endeavour on the part of His Majesty's Government, on the part of those leaders

with whom I have conferred and of their friends, as well as on my own part, that we have no more to show and that in so many Provinces we should be left with no choice but to use the emergency provisions inserted for that purpose in the Government of India Act. As for those provisions, let me emphasize that they are an expedient and not a sanction. My own strong feeling in regard to their use I cannot better convey than by a paraphrase of the quotation that appears in Arabic characters upon the great gateway at Fatehpur Sikri. That quotation says, "Life is a bridge—a bridge that you shall pass over. You shall not build your house upon it."

Nor, in the wider field, do I propose to take this disappointment as final, or to abandon the efforts I am making to bring about a friendly adjustment of the differences in this country to the end that we can continue to cooperate over the achievement of our common objectives. Differences and difficulties such as those which now threaten to retard—even reverse—the course of constitutional development in India and the earliest attainment of the common goal will not disappear spontaneously, nor will they be conjured away by any refusal to recognize their existence. They will be resolved only by negotiations, carried out in a spirit of mutual accommodation and trust and with a firm resolve to succeed.

I will say no more than that tonight. But I would ask for patience and for the goodwill of the Indian people and of the great political organizations—their members and their leaders—in the efforts I propose to continue to make.

The difficulties are great. How great they are has been most clearly revealed by the events of the last six weeks. But the attempt to reconcile them is one which it is imperative to make and in which, whether I fail or I succeed, I shall spare no effort to bring about the result which is, I know, at the heart of all of those who care for India and for her future.

## 28. *Viceroy's Prefatory Remarks to correspondence with leaders*

5 November 1939

I next invited Mr. Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah to come to see me on November 1, and we discussed the whole position with them frankly. I had already in my previous conversations discussed with them, as with almost all my visitors, from various aspects the possibility of an expansion of the Governor-General's Council. I now told them that if in regard to association at the Centre we had been unable to go farther than the Consultative Group, it was because of the lack of prior agreement between the major communities such as would contribute to harmonious working in the Centre. I added that the manifestos issued on 22nd October, by the Congress Working Committee and the Muslim League, had shown only too clearly the gulf that existed between the attitude of

these two great parties.

I begged my visitors in these circumstances to meet and to have discussions among themselves on the Provincial position, with a view thereafter to putting forward in agreement proposals which could be considered for some expansion of the Governor-General's Council at the Centre. I told them that I saw no necessity for every detail of the differences between them in the Provinces to be resolved. What was needed was a sufficient resolution of those differences to make the devising of scheme for harmonious cooperation at the Centre practicable. I begged them in the most earnest manner to spare no endeavour to reach agreement; and I emphasized that this was essentially a question affecting Indians on which agreement between Indians themselves was what I was anxious to secure. I repeated the profound anxiety not only of myself but of His Majesty's Government to leave nothing undone which would contribute to achieve that agreement.

The discussions which I suggested have taken place. But the result to me has been a profound disappointment. There remains today entire disagreement between the representatives of the major parties on fundamental issues. All I will say now is that I am not prepared to accept this failure. I propose in due course to try again, in consultation with the leaders of these great parties and the Princes, to see if even now there may still be the possibility of securing unity. During all the time I have been in India, there is nothing I have been more anxious to secure than unity, and unity matters far more to India than is perhaps always realized. Unity, too, means that Indians, whatever their community or whatever their party allegiance, and whether they dwell in British India or in the Indian States, must work together in a common scheme. It is worth a great deal to try to bring that about. I may have been unsuccessful so far but I will try again. And when I try again I would ask India to remember my difficulties, and give me credit for an earnest goodwill and an earnest desire to assist. We are dealing with a problem that has defeated the united endeavours of the greatest organizations in this country. There are grave differences of view which have to be taken into account, which should be bridged. There are strong and deeply rooted interests which are entitled to the fullest consideration and whose attitude is not a thing lightly to be brushed aside. There are minorities which are great in numbers as well as great in historic importance, and in culture. Those are all factors to which full weight has to be given. But complex as the problems are, I refuse to regard them as insoluble, and I prefer to believe that, like other human problems, they will yield to patient discussion in a spirit of goodwill. In this behalf I am encouraged by the friendly feeling which has pervaded my discussions with the leaders of parties. I would ask the country, and I would ask the leaders of the great political parties and their constituents, who I know have faith in those leaders, and are ably led by them, to give me the help which I so much need if there is to be any hope of overcoming our difficulties and reaching the result which I am sure that we all of us desire.

29. *Resolution passed at a meeting of the Sindhi residents of Bangalore City and Cantonment held on 7 November 1939, under the presidentship of Mangoomal Lunidasing Seth, on the murder of Bhagat Kanwar*

1. This meeting of the Sindhi residents of Bangalore City and Cantt. express their horror and indignation at the dastardly and murderous attack made on the life of the greatest spiritual, religious and devotional Bard of the Modern Sind—Bhagat Kanwar—and hereby calls upon the authorities to mete out the utmost punishment under the law to the inhuman and soulless culprits who have perpetrated a great crime not only against one of the greatest spiritual forces in the country but against the whole of the Sindhi community in whose hearts Bhagat Kanwar by his highly devotional songs had carved out a unique and unrivalled position.

2. This meeting respectfully calls upon the leaders in Sind to exert their utmost to see not only that exemplary punishment is given to the mean murderers of Bhagat Kanwar but also to concert effective measures to make the life, honour and property of the Hindus in Sind more safe than it has been particularly since the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency. If a man like Bhagat Kanwar who was not only loved but adored by millions of his countrymen of all communities, a man who was the very embodiment of the ideals of Love, Selflessness, Service and Non-Violence could be murdered in cold blood at a crowded Railway Junction, surrounded by scores of his followers, how very unsafe must be the lives of the millions of Hindus living specially in the rural parts of the Province where the Mohammedan element preponderates.

3. This meeting resolves not to celebrate Deepavali as a mark of grief and mourning for the Saint's murder. All the Sindhis in Bangalore City and Cantt. have observed hartal today.

4. This meeting prays to the Almighty to rest the soul of the departed Bhagat in eternal peace and joins with millions of Sindhis all over the world in offering their heartfelt condolences to the members of his family.

5. Resolved that copies of these resolutions be forwarded to the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi, Governor of Sind, President of the Indian National Congress, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, President of the Sind Congress Committee, President of the Sind Hindu Mahasabha, President of the Shikarpur (Sind) Panchayat, Members of the Bhagat's family and the Press.

Mangoomal Lunidasing Seth  
President

Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
President  
The Indian National Congress  
Patna.

30. *Resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Allahabad during its session from November 19 to 23, 1939*

The Working Committee have noted with pleasure the response of the country to the policy enunciated by them in regard to the war crisis in Europe and its repercussions in India. This policy, based on numerous declarations of the Congress, was laid down in the statement issued by the Committee on 14 September 1939, and subsequent events have amply justified its wisdom and expediency. The course of the war and the policy pursued by the British and French Governments, and, in particular, the declarations made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India, seem to demonstrate that the present war, like the World War of 1914-1918, is being carried on for imperialist ends, and British imperialism is to remain entrenched in India. With such a war and with this policy the Congress cannot associate itself, and it cannot countenance the exploitation of India's resources to this end.

The Working Committee's unequivocal demand was for a declaration of war aims in regard to democracy and imperialism and, in particular, how these aims were going to be applied to India. These aims could only be considered worthy, if they included the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as an independent nation whose policy would be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people. The answer to this demand has been entirely unsatisfactory, and an attempt has been made on behalf of the British Government to create misunderstandings and to befog the main and moral issue. In justification of this refusal to make a declaration in terms of the Working Committee's resolution, communal pleas have been advanced and the rights of minorities and of the Princes pleaded as a barrier to India's freedom.

The Committee wish to declare with all emphasis that no communal considerations arise in meeting the demand of the Congress, and the minorities, whatever their other differences might be, do not oppose India's right to freedom and independence. The Princes are represented by, and are the emblems of, the Paramount Power in India. In the end, it will be the people of the Indian States who will determine what part they will take in a free India, though the British Government have consistently ignored their wishes in the matter which vitally affects them. In any event, the wishes of those who may oppose India's independence are, and must be, irrelevant to the declaration of the British Government's intentions. The Committee can only interpret this attempt to avoid a statement of war aims and Indian freedom, by taking shelter under irrelevant issues, as a desire to maintain imperialist domination in India in alliance with the reactionary elements in the country.

The Congress has looked upon the war crisis and the problems it raises as essentially a moral issue, and has not sought to profit by it in any spirit of bargaining. The moral and dominant issue of war aims and India's freedom have to be settled satisfactorily before any other subsidiary question can be considered.

In no event can the Congress accept the responsibility of Government, even in the transitional period, without real power being given to popular representatives. The Working Committee, therefore, approve of and endorse the reply dated 4 November 1939, sent by the Congress President to the Viceroy.

The Committee wish to declare again that the recognition of India's independence and of the right of her people to frame their Constitution through a Constituent Assembly is essential in order to remove the taint of imperialism from Britain's policy and to enable the Congress to consider further cooperation. They hold that a Constituent Assembly is the only democratic method of determining the Constitution of a free country, and no one who believes in democracy and freedom can possibly take exception to it. The Working Committee believes, too, that the Constituent Assembly alone is the adequate instrument for solving the communal and other difficulties. This, however, does not mean that the Working Committee will relax their efforts for arriving at a solution of the communal problem. This Assembly can frame a Constitution in which the rights of accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction, and in the event of some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration. The Constituent Assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, existing separate electorates being retained for such minorities as desire them. The number of [these] members in the Assembly should reflect their numerical strength.

The declaration made on behalf of the British Government being inadequate, have compelled the Congress to dissociate itself from British policy and war effort, and, as a first step in non-cooperation, to bring about the resignations of all the Congress Governments in the Provinces. The policy of non-cooperation continues and must continue unless the British Government revises its policy and accepts the Congress contention.

The Working Committee would, however, remind Congressmen that it is inherent in every form of Satyagraha that no effort is spared to achieve an honourable settlement with the opponent. While a Satyagrahi is ever ready for a non-violent fight, if it has to come, he never relaxes his effort for peace and always works for its attainment. The Working Committee will, therefore, continue to explore the means of arriving at an honourable settlement, even though the British Government has banged the door in the face of the Congress. The Committee must, however, resist, by the non-violent methods of the Congress, all attempts to coerce the people of India along paths which are not of their choice and everything that is against the dignity and freedom of India.

The Working Committee appreciate and express pleasure at the readiness exhibited by Congressmen for the launching of Civil Disobedience, should this become necessary. But Civil Disobedience requires the same strict discipline as an army organised for armed conflict. The army is helpless unless it possesses its weapons of destruction and knows how to use them; so also an army of non-violent soldiers is ineffective unless it understands and possesses the essentials of non-violence.

The Working Committee desire to make it clear that the true test of preparedness for Civil Disobedience lies in Congressmen themselves spinning and promoting the cause of khadi to the exclusion of mill-cloth, and deeming it their duty to establish harmony between communities by personal acts of service to those other than members of their own community, and individual Hindu Congressmen seeking occasion for fraternising with the Harijans as often as possible. Congress organisation and Congressmen should, therefore, prepare for future action by promoting this programme. They should explain to the people the message and policy of the Congress and the implications of the Constituent Assembly which is the crux of the Congress programme for the future.

*31. Report of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee*

*Mr. Devraj Sethi.* The charges against him are:

- (1) that he tried to negotiate with Mr. Daveswar Varma for a compromise in regard to the election petition preferred by him against Mr. Sethi against the express wishes of the Leader of the Congress Assembly Party;
- (2) that in the attempt for this compromise, he paid Rs.2,000 as compensation to Mr. Varma.

Dr. Satyapal sent a communication to Babu Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad regarding charge No. 2, enclosing the judgement of the Election Tribunal in which this charge was mentioned.

We requested Dr. Satyapal to meet us so that we might discuss these charges with him, but he declined to do so on the plea that he did not make any representation to the Party seeking justice at its hands.

We examined Dr. Gopichand Bhargava as well as Mr. Devraj Sethi. We also went through the correspondence which passed between the Leader and the member of the High Command on the subject. We are satisfied that Mr. Devraj Sethi entered into negotiations for a compromise with Mr. Varma against the express wishes of the Leader of the Party and that he did pay Rs.2,000 to Mr. Varma according to Mr. Sethi's own confession. We have painfully come to the conclusion that Mr. Sethi acted in a manner most unbecoming of a Congress candidate. We do realise that in his anxiety to retain his seat in the Assembly, he lost his sense of proportion and became extremely nervous and that, in this state of mind, he bade farewell to his sense of discrimination of right and wrong. Mr. Sethi is himself now repentant and is prepared to offer an unqualified apology to the Party.

We are of the opinion that the Leader of the Party acted wisely in obtaining Mr. Sethi's resignation from his Assembly seat but he had no authority to

forward it to His Excellency the Governor without the consent of the Party. After taking into account every aspect of the question, we feel, without any intention on our part to condone Mr. Sethi's conduct, that under the circumstances it is in the interests of the Party that his unqualified apology should be accepted and that the matter be closed. It will not be out of place to mention it here that Mr. Sethi has already suffered much agony and punishment elsewhere on account of his conduct under consideration.

*Ch. Kartar Singh.* The charges against him are:

- (1) that he gave a dinner at Okara in honour of the Minister of Development, Punjab, during his official visit to Okara; and
- (2) that he is interested in a firm which obtained loan from the Government under the State Aid to Industries Act.

We examined Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Ch. Kartar Singh on the subject. As Dr. Satyapal declined to meet us, we could not get his views. It is a fact that Ch. Kartar Singh gave a dinner to the Minister for Development, which was attended by a few officials and non-officials of Okara. Ch. Kartar Singh's contention is that the dinner was a private and a social one. When certain Congress workers of Okara pointed out to Ch. Kartar Singh that the dinner party was open to objection, Ch. Kartar Singh was prepared to cancel the dinner if the Leader of the Congress Assembly Party advised him to do so. Ch. Kartar Singh tried to get into touch with the Leader of the Party on the telephone, but unfortunately the Leader of the Party was out of station then.

It must be said to Ch. Kartar Singh's credit that he was willing to abide by the decision of the Leader if it could be obtained. It may further be stated that in a communication to the Leader in reply to his letter for explanation Ch. Kartar Singh said whatever he had done was bona fide but that if he had acted unwisely he was prepared to express regret and bow to the decision of the Party.

We believe that this case is not merely an individual one and that it vitally affects the policy of the Congress Party in regard to its attitude towards social intercourse with the Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Government officials. We feel that the members of the Congress Party have not been clear in their minds as to what is a social function and what is not.

We, therefore, recommend that this general question should be referred to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee for clear instructions.

In this particular case, we suggest that the benefit of doubt should be given to Ch. Kartar Singh and the matter be dropped.

As regards the second charge, we are of the opinion that no Congressman is precluded from joining business which seeks state aid for development.

*S. Ajit Singh.* The charges against him are:

- (1) that he attended a Conference of the Unionists which was addressed by Ch. Chhotu Ram and others; and



(2) that he published an open "Address" addressed to the Punjab Premier.

(1) We do not see any objection to his attending such a Conference particularly when he approached the President of the Conference for time to place the Congress view before the audience.

(2) We have gone through the address and we find that it contains the grievances of the people which go to discredit the Unionist Government. We do feel that this poser should have been addressed in the form of an open letter and not in the form of an "Address". But as held by S. Ajit Singh, the whole thing was done by a resolution of the Burewala Congress Committee. In our opinion there is no valid charge against him.

Sampuran Singh, M.L.A.

Kapur Singh, M.L.A.

Krishnagopal Dutt, M.L.A.

### 32. *Celebration of Gandhi Jayanti*

Gandhiji's seventy-first birthday which fell on October 2, attracted more than usual attention and interest. His message of non-violence stood out in conspicuous relief against the tragic background of a destructive war going on in Europe.

The country celebrated the event as usual by devoting a whole fortnight to the promotion of such activities as are dear to Gandhiji, the chief being the propaganda and sale of khadi. Workers everywhere strove to dispose of large stocks of khadi. The birthday celebrations were also marked by public meetings held all over the country where the significance of Gandhiji's life, message and philosophy were explained to the public and congratulatory resolutions passed. Many papers issued special Gandhi Jayanti numbers. Many others published articles dealing with his life and work.

Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor of the Hindu University, Benares, presented to Mahatma Gandhi on his birthday a memorial volume entitled *Essays and Reflections on Mahatma Gandhi*. The volume is a collection of tributes from eminent persons in all spheres of life and from all parts of the world.

Mahatmaji received congratulatory messages from individuals and associations all over the world, wishing him health and long life and praying for the success of his message of non-violence, peace and goodwill.

### 33. *Madhe-Sahaba controversy in Lucknow*

In order to appreciate the present position in Lucknow it is necessary to give an antecedent history culminating in it.

It is well-known that Moharram ceremonies are strictly observed by the Shias in all parts of India and other Muslim countries. The Sunnis and even the Hindus have taken part in these celebrations. In 1905 or 1906, for the first time in the history of the world, certain Sunnis led by Maulavi Abdul Shakoor attempted to take out in procession what are known as 'Charyari Jhanda' reciting as they went certain poems in praises of the first three Khalifs and also carried some Tazias with the name of the four Khalifs. The poems were not only in their praises but apart from praises which were intrinsically offensive, there were other matters which were highly offensive to the feeling of the Shias and there were lots of troubles because of these recitations. Government then appointed a Committee consisting of two Europeans, two Sunnis, two Shias and two Hindus. It may be noted that the two Sunnis who had been appointed as members in the first instance could not take part in the deliberations and Maulavi Abdul Shakoor who was the prime mover of the Madhe-Sahaba agitation was taken in place of one of the two and remained there till the termination of the proceedings.

Shortly stated, the findings of the Committee were that the recitation of 'Charyari' songs now known as Madhe-Sahaba is an innovation. It had never been done anywhere in any part of the world and the praises of the three Khalifs were chanted aggressively with a view to irritate the Shias. Government accepted the report of the Committee and prohibited the Madhe-Sahaba. The Lieutenant-Governor in various speeches afterwards repeated the Committee's findings and held that Madhe-Sahaba should not be allowed as it was done with the object of offending the Shias. There were several small fracas between Sunnis and Shias but everything settled down in 1912. From 1912 till 1935, for a period of about 23 years, not a whisper of Madhe-Sahaba was made in Lucknow or anywhere else. In 1935 an attempt was again made to recite the praises on the Chehlum day when two men courted arrest by advising the Sunnis to disobey the order against public recitation in praise of the Khalifs. Those two men were bound down under Sec. 107, Criminal Procedure Code. Nothing happened till 10th of Moharram 1936 when two Sunnis disobeyed Police orders by deliberately reciting praises of the first 3 Khalifs. Then another attempt was made to take out a procession in June 1936. Then an attempt was made to recite Madhe-Sahaba every Friday in procession and Government tried to bring about a settlement but, having failed, appointed a Committee consisting of Mr. Justice Allsop of the Allahabad High Court and Mr. Ross, I.C.S. That Committee went into the whole question again and having considered all questions of facts and law arrived at findings, a few of which are herewith reproduced:

"1. If the Sunnis had wished only to praise their Caliphs without having any idea of triumphing over the Shias, they might have recited Madhe-Sahaba publicly in some unobtrusive way, but they never attempted to do so.

"2. When we take the facts as a whole into consideration, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the movement was essentially directed against the Shias.

"3. We are of opinion that the practice of the local authorities in forbidding Madhe-Sahaba processions in 1935 and 1936 was justified.

"4. We do not think that it should be assumed that the public recitation of Madhe-Sahaba is always in all circumstances objectionable, but we are bound to say that the authorities will have to take similar action in similar circumstances in future particularly if the Sunni agitation is continued.

"5. There is no true analogy between Madhe-Sahaba and Tazia processions; a true analogy would be between the recitation of Madhe-Sahaba and Tabarra and thus in our opinion it cannot be asserted with any show of reason that there is any discrimination against the Sunnis in the Government resolution.

"6. We do not approve of the public recitation of Tabarra and the Shias in the present circumstances admit that it is objectionable, but if Sunnis were allowed to recite Madhe-Sahaba publicly merely to advertise their belief that first three Caliphs were worthy of all praise Shias might with some justice claim to recite Tabarra in order to instruct their more ignorant brethren in the doctrine which they hold with equal strength that the three Caliphs are properly objects of abhorrence. The Sunnis have argued that abuse of religious leaders is forbidden by law and that praise can never be objectionable. Neither proposition is completely true. On the one hand criticism of religious leaders in good faith without a deliberate and malicious intention of outraging religious feeling would not be an offence and on the other it would be easy to multiply instances in which praise would be offensive and provocative. Songs in honour of Fascist leaders might, for example, be justly resented along the route of a Communist procession."

These findings were accepted by the communique of Government dated 19th March 1938. In paragraph 5 Government say as follows:

The U.P. Government devoted most careful and anxious consideration to the arguments and conclusions so clearly set forth in the report and accepted the Committee's findings.

Another communique was issued in November 1938 in which Government stated that the public recitation of Madhe-Sahaba is not in dispute. What is in dispute is the method of doing so. The Shias protested against those observations of the Government. Agitation was then started by the Sunnis for general permission of reciting the Madhe-Sahaba. A Civil Disobedience movement was set on foot. It must be mentioned that leading members of the Sunni community took no part either in the agitation or Civil Disobedience movement. People who courted arrest or went to jail could be hired and were mostly hired for this purpose. On the 31st March 1939 the offending communique was issued accepting the right of the Sunnis to recite Madhe-Sahaba on all days in the year but giving them permission only on the Barabafat day, *every year in any circumstances.*

It is difficult to appreciate the reasons which led the Government to pass this order, thereby finishing with one stroke of pen the findings of the Allsop Committee and their recommendations which they had already accepted in

March 1938.

It is suggested that the Government communique is not inconsistent with the report of the Allsop Committee inasmuch as the Allsop Committee had also recognised the right of Sunnis to recite Madhe-Sahaba publicly, but Government forget that in their finding No. 4 quoted above under which shelter is taken by the Government the Committee had clearly stated that we are bound to say that the authorities will have to take similar action in similar cases in the future particularly if the Sunni agitation is continued and also as held by them in finding No. 2 quoted above "that the movement was essentially directed against the Shias" and as such was rightly opposed by the authorities. It is clear therefore that the Government issued the communique in the teeth of these findings and it seems incredible that they should rely upon the general statement in the report without the setting in which that statement is made to justify their action.

It is further said that Tabarra is abuse and Madhe-Sahaba is not. I have in vain tried to find out what were actually the poems which were recited in 1905 and which have been recited by Sunnis since 1935. No one has given me all the verses. I have however got one in the Piggot Committee Report which says that anyone who does not believe in the first 3 Caliphs or even one of them will go to Hell, will go to Hell, will go to Hell.

In the poems recited recently one of the verses which was reported to me was the following:

Umar ka martaba Allah-ho-Akbar,  
Nabi ne tegh di Haider ne dokhtar

Free translation: How grand was the position of Umar inasmuch as the Prophet gave him the sword and Ali gave him the daughter. The second part according to the belief of the Shias can mean nothing [less] than abuse.

The position of the Government is that they have allowed processions and meetings of the Madhe-Sahaba in the outskirts of Lucknow near the Railway Station where there are no houses of Shias and therefore it could not be offensive to Shias. This argument when read in the light of the findings in the Allsop Committee Report which were accepted by the Government is wholly untenable. When the movement itself is directed against the Shias it does not matter where you hold the procession and the meeting; it will remain objectionable, and if the argument of Government is correct why cannot the Government allow the Shias to hold similar meetings and processions at a similar place within a mile of Lucknow where there may not be a single Sunni living and this is exactly what the Shias are claiming and any argument which is advanced by Government in support of this order will be equally applicable to the claims of Shias.

It must be here mentioned that Tabarra is not abuse. Tabarra merely means seeking deliverance from and the word 'Lannat' which is commonly used is equivalent to 'God's mercy be not on him'.

One does not know how Christians would allow Herod's praises being sung in

public or the Hindus will feel if Ravan's praises are recited in public. Will it be a good argument that these praises are recited though after full advertisement of the meeting of the procession where they may be recited has been given because Government allows them in a locality where there are no Christians or Hindus? It is submitted that every time the main thing which has to be enquired into is whether it is only performance of religious duties or it is done mainly for the purpose of annoying or wounding the religious susceptibilities of others. If the former, there may be no objection; if the latter, no sane Government can allow it.

That Madhe-Sahaba in public or otherwise is not obligatory on the Sunnis is clear from the statements already made in the Press by Sir Mohamad Yakub and Dr. Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan who both of them are Sunnis. In this connection I would like you to refer to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad for his views.

It is also not understandable why Government selected the birthday of the Prophet for the purpose of reciting the praises of the Caliphs.

I would only like to add that so far over 9,000 Shias have gone to jail—men of all classes, political faiths, and opinions. There is not one Shia who does not feel bitterly in this matter. But I am convinced that there are plenty of Sunnis who feel that Government had no justification whatsoever for passing this order, more so when the Cabinet consists of 2 Sunni members and there is no Shia in it. It is the conviction of the Shias that Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim has acted more in [the] spirit of a bigoted Sunni rather than an impartial Minister.

#### SOLUTION

After having allowed the Sunnis to recite Madhe-Sahaba in procession and at the meeting on the 3rd inst., the position has become complicated. Up till the 2nd May 1939 a clear assurance to the Muslim Ministers was given by the Sunni leaders who were behind the movement that they will themselves make a declaration after the procession and the meeting that they will never have any procession and meeting in future and that Government would prohibit the recitation in public for ever. Mr. Kidwai also told me that the Government will issue the necessary communique on the 4th May but so far no communique has been issued but I was however told on telephone by Mr. Kidwai that the Sunni leaders met him after the procession and meeting and resiled from the undertaking. I cannot see how Government can support any more those who have committed breach of faith with them. If Government feel that they cannot enforce this undertaking given by the Sunnis they are in all fairness bound to give the Shias the right of expression of their belief that those on whom praises are showered by Sunnis far from deserving them are guilty of acts which justify their abhorrence. I would suggest that:

(1) No more recitation of praises by the Sunnis or the Tabarra by the Shias should be allowed. This can be done [on] no other ground [than] of the likelihood of breach of peace.

(2) As a *quid pro quo* Government should allow the Shias a procession and

meeting in an outlandish place where they may give expression to their distinct belief.

I am enclosing the Report of the Allsop Committee for your perusal.

Enclosure not included.

34. *Congress and War: Resolutions on War passed by the Congress Working Committee, A.I.C.C., and the open sessions since 1927*

1. CHINA  
(A.I.C.C., Bombay—May 1927)

The All India Congress Committee assures the Chinese people of its fullest sympathy in their struggle for freedom, condemns the action of the Government of India in despatching Indian troops to China and demands their immediate withdrawal.

2. CONGRESS AND WAR  
(Madras Congress—December 1927)

This Congress sends its warmest greetings to the people of China and its assurances of full sympathy with them in their fight for emancipation and records its condemnation of the action of the Indian Government in refusing passports to the Medical Mission which the All India Congress Committee wanted to send to China. The Congress has noted with deep resentment that Indian troops have again been used by the British Government to further their imperialist designs in China [and to prevent its people] from gaining their freedom.

The Congress demands that all the Indian troops and police forces still in China be recalled immediately and that no Indian should go to China in future as an agent of the British Government to fight or work against the Chinese people, who, in the opinion of the Congress, are the comrades of the Indian people in their joint struggle against imperialism.

The Congress further demands the withdrawal of Indian troops, police and Consulate Guards from Mesopotamia and Persia and from all British Colonies and foreign countries, wheresoever they may be.

3. WAR DANGER  
(Madras Congress—December 1927)

This Congress has noted with grave concern the extraordinary and extensive war preparations which the British Government is carrying on in India and in the eastern seas specially in the north-west frontier of India. These preparations for war are not only calculated to strengthen the hold of British imperialism in India

in order to strangle all attempts at freedom, but must result in hastening a disastrous war in which an attempt will be made to make India again a tool in the hands of foreign imperialists.

The Congress declares that the people of India have no quarrel with their neighbours and desire to live at peace with them and asserts their right to determine whether or not they will take part in any war.

The Congress demands that these war preparations be put an end to; and further declares that in the event of the British Government embarking on any warlike adventure and endeavouring to exploit India in it for the furtherance of their imperialist aims, it will be the duty of the people of India to refuse to take any part in such a war or to cooperate with them in any way whatsoever.

#### 4. WAR DANGER

(Calcutta Session—December 1928)

This Congress reiterates the War Danger resolution of the Madras session of the Congress, and wishes to declare that the present Government of India in no way represents the people of India and their policy has been traditionally guided by considerations of holding India under subjection and not of protecting her frontiers. The people of India have no quarrel with the neighbouring states or the other nations of the world and they will not permit themselves to be exploited by England to further her imperialist aims.

#### 5. WAR DANGER

(Lucknow Session—April 1936)

The Congress, at its session held in Madras in 1927, drew the attention of the country to the danger of imperialist war and possibility of India being made a tool in such a conflict for imperialist purposes, and declared the right of the Indian people to refuse to participate in any such war without their express permission. That danger has become more evident and urgent since then with the growth of fascist dictatorships, the Italian attack on Abyssinia, the continuing Japanese aggression in North China and Mongolia, the rivalries and conflicts of the great imperialist powers, and the feverish growth of armaments, and vast and terrible war threatens the world. In such a war an attempt will inevitably be made to drag in and exploit India to her manifest disadvantage and for the benefit of British imperialism. The Congress therefore reiterates its old resolve and warns the people of the country against this danger, and declares its opposition to the participation of India in any imperialist war.

#### 6. WAR DANGER

(Faizpur Session—December 1936)

The Congress has drawn repeated attention in the past to the danger of imperialist war and has declared that India can be no party to it. Since the last

session of the Congress the crisis has deepened and fascist aggression has increased, the fascist powers forming alliances and grouping themselves together for war with the intention of dominating Europe and the world and crushing political and social freedom. The Congress is fully conscious of the necessity of facing this world menace in cooperation with the progressive nations and peoples of the world, and especially with those peoples who are dominated over and exploited by imperialism and fascism. In the event of such a world war taking place there is grave danger of Indian man-power and resources being utilised for the purposes of British imperialism, and it is therefore necessary for the Congress to warn the country again against this and prepare it to resist such exploitation of India and her people. No credits must be voted for such a war and voluntary subscriptions and war loans must not be supported and all other war preparations resisted.

#### 7. WAR DANGER AND FOREIGN POLICY (Haripura Session—February 1938)

In view of the grave danger of widespread and devastating war which overshadows the world, the Congress desires to state afresh the policy of the Indian people in regard to foreign relations and war.

The people of India desire to live in peace and friendship with their neighbours and with all other countries, and for this purpose wish to remove all causes of conflict between them. Striving for their own freedom and independence as a nation, they desire to respect the freedom of others, and to build up their strength on the basis of international cooperation and goodwill. Such cooperation must be founded on a world order and a free India will gladly associate itself with such an order, and stand for disarmament and collective security. But world cooperation is impossible of achievement so long as the roots of international conflict remain and one nation dominates over another and imperialism holds sway. In order, therefore, to establish world peace on an enduring basis, imperialism and the exploitation of one people by another must end.

During the past few years there has been a rapid and deplorable deterioration in international relations, fascist aggression has increased and an unabashed defiance of international obligations has become the avowed policy of fascist powers. British foreign policy, in spite of its evasions and indecisions, has consistently supported the fascist powers in Germany, Spain and the Far East, and must therefore largely shoulder the responsibility for the progressive deterioration of the world situation. That policy still seeks an arrangement with Nazi Germany and has developed closer relations with Rebel Spain. It is helping in the drift to imperialist world war.

India can be no party to such an imperialist war and will not permit her man-power and resources to be exploited in the interests of British imperialism. Nor can India join any war without the express consent of her people. The Congress,



therefore, entirely disapproves of war preparations being made in India and large-scale manoeuvres and air-raid precautions by which it has been sought to spread an atmosphere of approaching war in India. In the event of an attempt being made to involve India in a war, this will be resisted.

#### 8. FOREIGN POLICY (Tripuri Session—March 1939)

The Congress records its entire disapproval of British foreign policy culminating in the Munich Pact, the Anglo-Italian Agreement and the recognition of Rebel Spain. This policy has been one of deliberate betrayal of democracy, repeated breach of pledges, the ending of the system of collective security and cooperation with governments which are avowed enemies of democracy and freedom. As a result of this policy, the world is being reduced to a state of international anarchy where brutal violence triumphs and flourishes unchecked and decides the fate of nations, and in the name of peace stupendous preparations are being made for the most terrible wars. International morality has sunk so low in Central and South-Western Europe that the world has witnessed with horror the organised terrorism of the Nazi Government against people of the Jewish race and the continuous bombing from the air by rebel forces of cities and civilian inhabitants and helpless refugees.

The Congress dissociates itself entirely from British foreign policy which has consistently aided the fascist Powers and helped in the destruction of democratic countries. The Congress is opposed to imperialism and fascism alike and is convinced that world peace and progress require the ending of both of these. In the opinion of the Congress, it is urgently necessary for India to direct her own foreign policy as an independent nation, thereby keeping aloof from both imperialism and fascism, and pursuing her path of peace and freedom.

#### 9. THE NATIONAL DEMAND (Tripuri Session—March 1939)

The Congress has for more than half a century striven for the advancement of the people of India and has represented the urge of the Indian people towards freedom and self-expression. During the past twenty years it has engaged itself on behalf of the masses of the country in struggle against British imperialism, and, through the suffering and disciplined sacrifice of the people, it has carried the nation a long way to the independence that is its objective. With the growing strength of the people, it has adapted itself to a changing and developing situation, and while pursuing various programmes, it has ever worked for the independence of India and the establishment of a democratic state in the country. Rejecting the Government of India Act and with the full determination to end it, it decided to take advantage of the measure of provincial autonomy that the Act provided, restricted and circumscribed as it was, in order to strengthen the national

movement and to give such relief to the masses as was possible under the circumstances. To the Federal part of the Act the Congress declared its uncompromising opposition and its determination to resist its imposition.

The Congress declares afresh its solemn resolve to achieve independence for the nation and to have a Constitution framed for a free India through a Constituent Assembly elected by the people on the basis of adult franchise and without any interference by a foreign authority. No other Constitution or attempted solution of the problem can be accepted by the Indian people.

The Congress is of opinion that in view of the situation in India, the organised strength of the national movement, the remarkable growth of consciousness of the masses, the new awakening among the people of the States, as well as the rapid development of the world situation, the principle of self-determination must now be applied to the fullest extent to India so that the people of India might establish an independent democratic state by means of a Constituent Assembly. Not only the inherent right and dignity of the people demand this full freedom, but also the economic and other problems which press insistently on the masses, cannot find solution nor can India get rid of her poverty and keep pace with modern progress, unless her people have full opportunities of self-development and growth which independence alone can give. Provincial autonomy affords no such scope for development and its capacity for good is being rapidly exhausted; the proposed Federation strangles India still further and will not be accepted. The Congress is therefore firmly of opinion that this whole Government of India Act must give place to a Constitution of a free India made by the people themselves.

An independent and democratic India will face the solution of her great problems rapidly and effectively and will line herself with the progressive peoples of the world and thus aid the cause of democracy and freedom.

With a view to a speedy realisation of the Congress objective and in order to face effectively the national and international crises that loom ahead and prepare the country for a nation-wide struggle, this Congress calls upon all parts of the Congress organisation, the Congress Provincial Governments and the people generally, to work to this end by promoting unity and seeking to eliminate disruptive forces and conditions which lead to communal conflicts and national disunity, by coordinating the activities of the Provincial Governments with the work outside the legislature, and by strengthening the organisation so as to make it a still more effective organ of the people's will.

#### 10. WAR DANGER AND AMENDMENT OF THE INDIA ACT (A.I.C.C., Calcutta—April 1939)

In view of the imminent danger of international war, the A.I.C.C. reminds the country and all others concerned of the national policy in regard to war which the Congress has often proclaimed. This policy will be strictly adhered to and the Congress is determined to oppose all attempts to impose a war on India and use

Indian resources in a war without the consent of the Indian people.

The Committee has noted with disapproval the despatch of a small body of Indian troops towards Aden as this can only mean their employment for British imperialist purposes.

The Committee, in particular, records its complete disapproval of the attempt being made by the British Government to amend the Government of India Act with a view to concentrating all power, in the event of a war emergency, in the hands of the Central Government which functions completely as an agent of British imperialism. While the Congress is not interested as a rule in amendments to the India Act and has worked for the whole Act to be ended, it cannot tolerate an amendment which strikes at the very basis of provincial autonomy and reduces it to a farce in case of war; which in effect creates a war dictatorship of the Central Government in India, and which makes Provincial Governments helpless agents of imperialism. Any attempt to impose such an amendment on India must and will be resisted in every way open to the Congress. Provincial Governments are warned to be ready to carry out the policy in this respect as may be determined by the A.I.C.C. or the Working Committee as the case may be.

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